new masses

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HOUSE-WRECKING IN WASHINGTON

by Virginia Gardner

INDIA: OUTLOOK FOR FREEDOM

by R. Palme Dutt

UNION BUTTONS ON WALL STREET

by Milton Blau

FIVE POEMS BY PAUL ELUARD

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just a minute

SPEAK of the devil and . . . Well, here's how it was. We had finished reading the galley proofs of Herbert Aptheker's editorial, "Hitlerism: Home Cooking" [NM, December 31], and waded into the morning's mail. The first letter on the pile was signed "Eddie Rickenbacker." "Now isn't this a small world," we thought—or something equally original. Because we'd just been reading about that gentleman in Dr. Aptheker's edit: about how Rickenbacker told the cheering businessmen of the Executive Club that radicals and refugees should be "cleaned out" and deported.

But that's not what he was writing about in this form letter. It was an appeal for funds for the World Sunday School Association's program to provide leadership for "every child cut adrift by World War II." Referring to that child it went on to say, "The emptiness in his heart, no soup kitchen can fill. The question in his eyes, no drillmaster can answer."

A truly imposing list of sponsors of the Association's postwar program to provide the answers was attached. First came the Heads of State: President Truman, H.M. King George VI, Chiang Kai-shek, H.M. King Christian X, H.M. King Gustav V, H.M. King Haakon VII and finally, in a regal gown, H.M. Queen Wilhelmina.

Then came the Distinguished Sponsors, with Captain Eddie V. himself as chairman: James F. Byrnes, Mrs. Calvin Coolidge, Herbert Hoover, William S. Knudsen, *et al.*

Lastly there was the Businessmen's contingent: the presidents of the Bell Telephone Co. of New Jersey, the Southern Pacific Railroad, the Metropolitan Life Insurance Co., the Firestone Tire & Rubber Co., the Ford Motor Co., the Studebaker Corp., Standard Oil of New Jersey, the International Harvester Co., the Borden Company, the Goodyear Rubber Co. and the International Business Machines Corp.

We might just have lowered our eyebrows and forgotten about the whole thing if the very next letter on our pile had not been from James A. Farley. What gives? But a quick double-take assured us this form letter too was addressed to NM and that the Christmas-harried mailman had not brought mail intended for *New Classes* uptown.

"Will you join us in American Brotherhood?" the Coca-Cola mogul asked, in an appeal for a program sponsored by the National Conference of Christians and Jews. "In reflecting upon the meaning of brotherhood," Brother Farley wrote, "I can recall no better summation of the term than the splendid words of Francis Cardinal Spellman of New York when he said: 'We must be men of principle, and courageously guard America and ourselves against those who in hypocrisy wear the soft, sheer garments of democracy's defenders, but in truth are enemies of the people's sacred rights and freedoms'." Brother Jim didn't give a credit line with that quote but we recalled reading something like that in one of Cardinal Spellman's pieces in Brother Dirty Willie's press. Or was it something by Hearst's little brother Budenz?

Hastily we thumbed through the rest of the mail—but no. Not a line from William Christian Bullitt or George H. Earle. Soreheads. Of course we knew that Bro. Bilbo was too busy these days—he'd made his appeals in behalf of the Juniper Grove Baptist Church. But he had sent his little form letters only to big-time contractors.

Well, it may be diverting for just a minute to see the atom bombsters, "holy war"-mongers and World Christian Frontiers decked out in flowing robes—but please, gentlemen! This is NEW MASSES. We write about you—not to you. We can see that your wings are a convertible job. Your big hearts beating in brotherly love don't drown out the ticking of the time bomb hidden in your voluminous vestments. And under your bright new halos—what about those two little bumps on the sides of your foreheads?

AS WE go to press the joint national membership convention of the National Citizens' Political Action Committee and the Independent Citizens' Committee of the Arts, Sciences and Professions is being held in New York. Watch for NM's comment next week. L. L. B.

new masses

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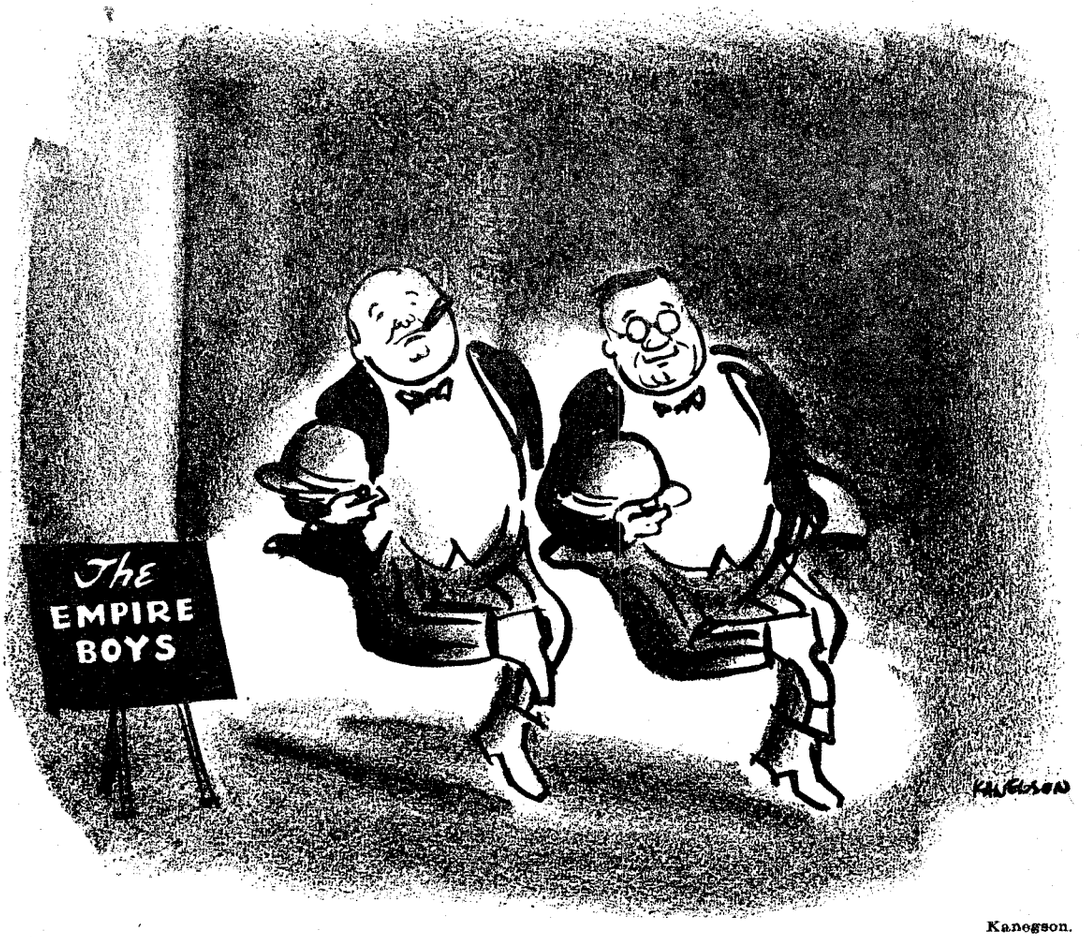

Kanegson.

INDIA: OUTLOOK FOR FREEDOM

An examination of the plan to grant "freedom" without shaking imperialist rule.

By R. PALME DUTT

London (by mail).

WHAT is the outlook for India in 1947? During 1946 the crisis deepened. The year opened with a universal national upsurge for freedom, uniting Hindus and Moslems, Congress Party and Moslem League followers in gigantic common demonstrations against imperialism, and culminating in the naval rising in Bombay last February. Then came the maneuvers of the British Cabinet Mission. The closing months have seen murderous communal conflicts, divided leadership, disorganization and frustration of the political movement and the fiasco of the London Conference. Meanwhile the driving forces of the crisis—the desperate economic situation, the misery and militancy of the masses, the agrarian unrest, the universal demand for the end of imperialist rule—continue to operate. The situation in India for 1947 is packed with dynamite.

The fiasco of the London Conference of the British government and Indian political leaders has demonstrated anew the failure of the Cabinet Mission's plan to bring a solution. Every Communist prediction and warning with regard to the character of that plan and its outcome has been justified by events.

In June, 1946, on the occasion of the departure of the Cabinet Mission, I wrote in the London *Daily Worker*: "The situation in India is dangerous and unstable and full of latent conflict. No basic problem has been solved. . . . Continued unsolved deadlocks [are] inherent in every stage of the plan. Experienced observers fear a grave intensification of communal antagonism as a result of the Mission's work. The general situation in India grows daily more menacing."

On the other hand, even as late as October the government's apologists

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were celebrating the plan as a triumphant realization of Indian freedom: "In India today one of the greatest advances in human history is taking place. Britain, which today wields power over 400,000,000 souls, is transferring control voluntarily and peacefully to an Indian democracy." (London *Daily Herald* editorial, Oct. 12, 1946.) "The Labor government in its Indian policy has undertaken the boldest renunciation of imperialism which history records." (Michael Foot in the *Daily Herald*, Oct. 15, 1946.)

Any impartial observer can today judge which description is closer to the realities of the present Indian situation.

The essence of the Indian problem today needs to be clearly seen behind the maze of constitutional subtleties, legal interpretations and endlessly protracted sectional negotiations.

Imperialism can no longer continue to rule India in the old way. The war not only brought extreme disorganization, but also shattered the prestige of British power. The world advance of liberation after victory over fascism kindled an unquenchable flame of revolt in India. Whereas the sporadic disturbances of 1942 were "suppressed with remarkable ease" (Churchill), and were followed by years of black repression and political inaction, the mass national revolt which swept through India at the close of the war and extended to the armed forces could no longer be handled in this way. Hence the Cabinet Mission was sent to India to prepare a new constitutional plan.

The dispatch of the Cabinet Mission did not represent a new decision of imperialism to grant freedom to India. In fact, the Labor government's Indian policy has revealed the same continuity with the preceding Tory policy as in other fields of world policy. Even the 1946 plan repeats the essential lines of the 1942 Tory offer. The first declaration of the Labor government with regard to India in October, 1945, was only to propose, following the elections due to be held under the existing constitution, conversations of the Viceroy with Indian leaders on the future Constituent Assembly, as already laid down in the Amery-Cripps Plan. As the situation became worse, the parliamentary delegation was sent, but won no response.

The announcement of the decision to send the Cabinet Mission followed the naval rising. It was an emergency measure to meet an emergency situation. In the words of the European leader in the Central Assembly in New Delhi: "India was on the verge of a revolution before the Cabinet Mission arrived. The Cabinet Mission has at least postponed, if not eliminated, the danger." (P. J. Griffiths, leader of the European Group in the Central Legislative Assembly, speech to the East India Association in London, June 24, 1946.)

THE tactics of imperialism in the face of mass national revolt are familiar. These are to seek to disrupt the national movement under cover of formal concessions to win over a section of the leadership, while leaving the essence of imperialist power intact. These tactics are illustrated in India today.

In the modern period these concessions have sometimes included formal recognition of "independence." The new imperialist technique of sham "independence" was first illustrated in Egypt. In face of the mass national revolt in Egypt at the close of the First World War, Egypt was proclaimed "independent" in 1922, and King Fuad was installed under British military protection and martial law. Military occupation continued, and certain key issues were left for future negotiation. Today, twenty-four years later, military occupation has not yet ended, and a new treaty is being imposed which even the majority of the hand-picked Egyptian delegation rejected. The same technique of "independence" was later applied to Iraq, and more recently to Transjordan. The same method has been followed by the United States in the Philippines.

The governing characteristics of this new imperialist technique of "independence" are that (1) military control is maintained either by direct military occupation or by treaty rights and holding of bases; (2) economic control is maintained by protection of the holdings and interests of the big monopoly concerns of the imperialist power; (3) a constitution is devised to place administration in the hands of sections cooperating with the imperialist power, which holds an overriding position to intervene in case of necessity. This technique is illustrated in the Indian Plan today.

A study of economic and military realities in India reveals the determination of imperialism to maintain its hold. Economically, Britain is not quitting India. British capital assets in India have recently been estimated by the Economic Adviser of the Federal Reserve Bank, Shenoy, at £2,200,000,000 (an exaggerated estimate). The biggest British monopolies are linking up with Indian monopoly concerns to form joint Indo-British corporations.

In the military sphere the British hold is being strengthened. Alongside the British military forces, the Indian Army, nearly half a million strong, is being maintained under British officers, and Indianization is resisted. The Princes' States military forces are being built up to increased strength under British control.

Alongside the moves to build a Middle Eastern anti-Soviet bloc, India represents the key base in Southern Asia for the reactionary anti-Soviet plans of the Anglo-American alliance. A host of evidence could be brought to show the very active preparations that are going forward. This objective colors the whole character of the present negotiations.

These economic and strategic aims of imperialism in India require a corresponding social and political basis in order to circumvent the overwhelming national demand for real independence. Hitherto the main social and and political basis of British power in India has rested on the Princes and feudal elements—the big landlord class created by British administration to constitute the loyal buttress of its power. This basis is now too narrow in the face of the rising mass revolt. Hence the effort is made to draw in the rising bourgeoisie, in association with the Princes and feudal elements, to cooperate with imperialism against the Indian masses.

TO FULFILL these aims, imperialism seeks the points of division within the national movement. Two main lines of division exist.

First, there is the division between the upper-class leadership and the masses. Class differentiation has been intensified in India by the war. The tiny capitalist class made gigantic profits, while the masses were impoverished. The capitalists seek new outlets and expansion for their capital, and press against the restrictions of imperialism. But they are conscious of their economic weakness, and they fear the masses. The upper-class leadership of both the Congress Party and the Moslem League condemned the naval rising, and prohibited the mighty demonstrations which drew out in its sup-

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port the whole population of Bombay and other great cities. In panic fear of a mass revolt, they were ready to welcome the Cabinet Mission and seek the path of cooperation with imperialism. But contradictions still remain which may upset the cooperation.

Second, there is the division between the Congress and the Moslem League. This division has been fostered by imperialist policy for the past forty years. The Moslem League was founded under British inspiration to spike the Congress. Today the Moslem League has decisive mass support among the Moslems. Behind this may be traced social and economic grounds, including the conflict of rival exploiting groups, utilizing religious slogans. The mass support in Moslem majority areas for the demand of "Pakistan," or a separate Moslem State in Northwest and Northeast India, reflects in a distorted form the growth of new forms of national consciousness within India; and the Communist Party of India has shown the democratic solution of this problem through the principle of national self-determination.

The Cabinet Mission's plan is based on these divisions. It seeks to balance and counterpoise the Congress, the League and the Princes in a complicated structure in such a way that ultimate control rests in fact with the British rulers. This balancing method characterizes equally the composition and procedure of the Constituent Assembly and the interim government.

The so-called Indian interim government is not a government with power. It is still the Viceroy's Executive Council, and the Viceroy retains supreme power. The Viceroy retains in his sole control the Political Department, dealing with the Princes. He also retains in his sole control all dealings with the provinces. There is not much left for this "interim government," which could at best only serve as a means of mobilization of the struggle for freedom.

Kanegson.

The Constituent Assembly, in addition to its undemocratic character and weightage by the Princes, is hamstrung by the fixed imposed division between Hindus and Moslems with a right of mutual veto.

The plan for a constitution proposed a weak center (with no social and economic powers) and compulsory provincial groupings in Northwest and Northeast India to establish separate constitutions. The Moslem League jumped at this plan on the grounds that the compulsory provincial grouping provided the "essence of Pakistan" and the center would be ineffective. But the Congress also accepted the plan on the grounds that the center could be strengthened, while the provincial groupings could be treated as optional and rendered ineffective by the refusal of the Congress-majority provinces to participate. Thus the supposed compromise only provided a new bone of contention. The joint acceptance of the plan concealed continuing conflict, as the London Conference revealed.

From this have followed the chronic crises and deadlocks inherent in the plan. The key to all the complex moves and negotiations which have followed the Cabinet Mission's departure is at bottom simple. The British authorities' aim is to keep both the Congress and the League in play so that they shall balance one another and leave overriding power in the hands of imperialism. The aim of the Congress and the League is to work the plan in such a way as to gain their separate objectives by winning the support of the British against the other. The net effect serves the tactics of imperialism and defeats the aims of both the Congress and the League, which have walked into the trap of the British Mission's plan instead of combining against imperialism.

The successive moves illustrate this general formula:

Phase 1. The Congress rejects the proposal for the interim government. The League at once accepts, hoping to secure the interim government in isolation.

Phase 2. The Viceroy is unwilling to give the government to the League in isolation and face the Congress opposition. The League withdraws its acceptance of the plan and calls for "direct action."

Phase 3. As soon as the League has moved to opposition, the Congress an-

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nounces acceptance of the plan, and secures the interim government.

Phase 4. The Viceroy, unwilling to risk the interim government in sole Congress hands, brings in the League, even though there is no agreement between the Congress and League and the joint ministers are at open war with each other.

Phase 5. The Congress announces its intention to go forward with the Constituent Assembly, in which it counts on rendering the provincial grouping ineffective and using its majority to establish a democratic federal republic. The League announces refusal to participate.

Phase 6. The British government intervenes again, this time from London, to bring the League into the Assembly, and thus restore the balance, and if this fails, threatens to refuse to recognize the results of the Assembly.

Especially significant is the final passage of the British government's statement of December 6: "Should a constitution come to be framed by a Constituent Assembly in which a large section of the Indian population had not been represented, His Majesty's Government could not of course contemplate forcing such a constitution upon any unwilling part of the country."

Thus the veto is placed in the hands of the Moslem League, and the final arbitrament rests with the British government. Such is the ignominious epitaph within six months of the supposed offer for Indians freely to choose their own form of government.

WHAT follows? Either the Congress submits, and the Constituent Assembly is paralyzed by the mutual veto of Congress and League, resulting in a constitution of impotence in accordance with the requirements of the plan; or the Congress endeavors to use its majority to frame a constitution according to its wishes, and the British government refuses to ratify the constitution—with the Congress possibly once again passing to opposition and even resumption of struggle.

In the final analysis British semi-official expression, as in recent London *Times* editorials, threatens to impose partition—the "solution" adopted in Ireland and proposed in Palestine. Hard experience is thus teaching Indian opinion the futility of the path of surrender and compromise which has been followed during the past nine months. The proceedings of the Meerut session of the National Congress have revealed the growing concern and disquiet.

The crisis in India continues. The communal conflicts are a symptom of the desperation and frustration of the masses, of the lack of united leadership; they are the evil fruits of the poisonous tree of communal politics, originally implanted and fostered by imperialist policy and accentuated by the Cabinet Mission's proceedings. The cure lies in united national struggle. As speaker after speaker at the Meerut Congress pointed out, there were no communal conflicts in India during the great united national struggles of the beginning of 1946 before the Mission came.

Despite the confusions and sectional divisions of the top leadership, the mass struggle in India is going forward and growing. This is shown in the advance of the strike movement to record heights (already 7,500,000 working days in the first seven months of 1946); the peasant unrest and the freedom battles against the Princes in a number of states, notably Kashmir and Travancore. The imperative need now for victory of Indian freedom is to forge anew the unity of the national independence movement from top to bottom, to end the path of surrender to imperialist maneuvers and to build a joint Congress-League-Communist front on the basis of rejection of the plan and the fight for full independence with recognition of the right of national self-determination within India. Only on this basis can Indian freedom be won. It is for these aims that the Communist Party of India is fighting.

The need is to support this fight, and to demand the replacement of the present plan by the unqualified recognition of Indian independence. The concrete test of such independence is the withdrawal of troops and the handing over of full powers to Indian leaders—either to a united national front, if such is formed, or, failing that, to the present Constituent Assembly as a sovereign body until such time as the Indians themselves call a real democratic Constituent Assembly based on adult suffrage. The present Indian situation is not an easy one and does not admit of easy solutions. But the urgent need of the crisis in India calls for such a plain democratic policy on the part of the Labor movement in place of maneuvers which only perpetuate Indian divisions and Indian subjection.

portside patter

By BILL RICHARDS

Bevin declares that Britain has "a mind and purpose of her own." He wants it made clear that Great Britain can blunder about without any help from our State Department.

●

The NAM is expected to launch an assault on the Wagner Act, the Norris-LaGuardia Act, and the Wages and Hours Law. In keeping with NAM's new "liberal" policy the Bill of Rights may be spared.

●

The president of the General Electric Company advocates freezing wages to avoid inflation. Corporate profits, on the other hand, are going high enough to freeze by themselves.

●

Princess Elizabeth and Prince Phillip of Greece are said to be very much in love. They say he'd go to Hellenes and back for her.

●

The House Committee on Un-American Activities is going to ask for increased appropriations. The committee is the last thing Rankin can afford to find in the red.

●

Ex-Governor Stassen of Minnesota has at least thrown his hat into the ring. Dewey and Taft are still talking through theirs.

●

There can be no doubt that Harry Truman's popularity has increased to the point where he must be considered for 1948. The fact that he is an amiable, likeable chap immeasurably strengthens his chances in forthcoming elections.

He is fond of children, fishing and playing the piano, qualities that cannot be overlooked as vote-getting potentialities. His obvious discomfort in the national limelight lends credulity to the belief that he seeks no personal gain from his political endeavors.

His simplicity and honesty alone should bring him to the forefront when party leaders meet. It is safe to say that Harry S. Truman's name will lead all the rest when candidates are nominated for mayor of Independence, Missouri.

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WHAT TALMADGE TOLD ME

By JOSEPH NORTH

GENE TALMADGE has been gathered to his forefathers where, I am certain, there are relatively few color distinctions. The funeral chant is finished, and the wreath of lilies bearing a pure white pennant engraved with three golden initials, K K K, is already withering in the graveyard. "Our Gene" is gone, and the obituaries have been cleared out of the morgue in the newspaper offices, those obits which depicted him as a colorful, backwoods politician, a quaint bit of Americana. One felt as though they were describing a sort of Ralph Greenleaf Whittier in politics: a bit more worldly than the poet, perhaps, but still, a man of the people. It was a different Gene Talmadge to whom I talked back in 1935.

The respectable New York *Herald Tribune* assessed him, finally, as a "symbol of backwoods intolerance, a sort of noisy minor league autocrat, who received an extraordinary volume of publicity considering the fact that he never amounted to much." I wonder how the ghosts of the two Negro couples murdered several months ago in Georgia, shot down at point-blank range, feel about that. And the million Georgia Negroes who had, possibly, a somewhat tangential view of his quaint ways, his red galluses, his penchant for riding a white horse up to the capital steps and flicking off a fly from his steed with a well-directed stream of tobacco juice.

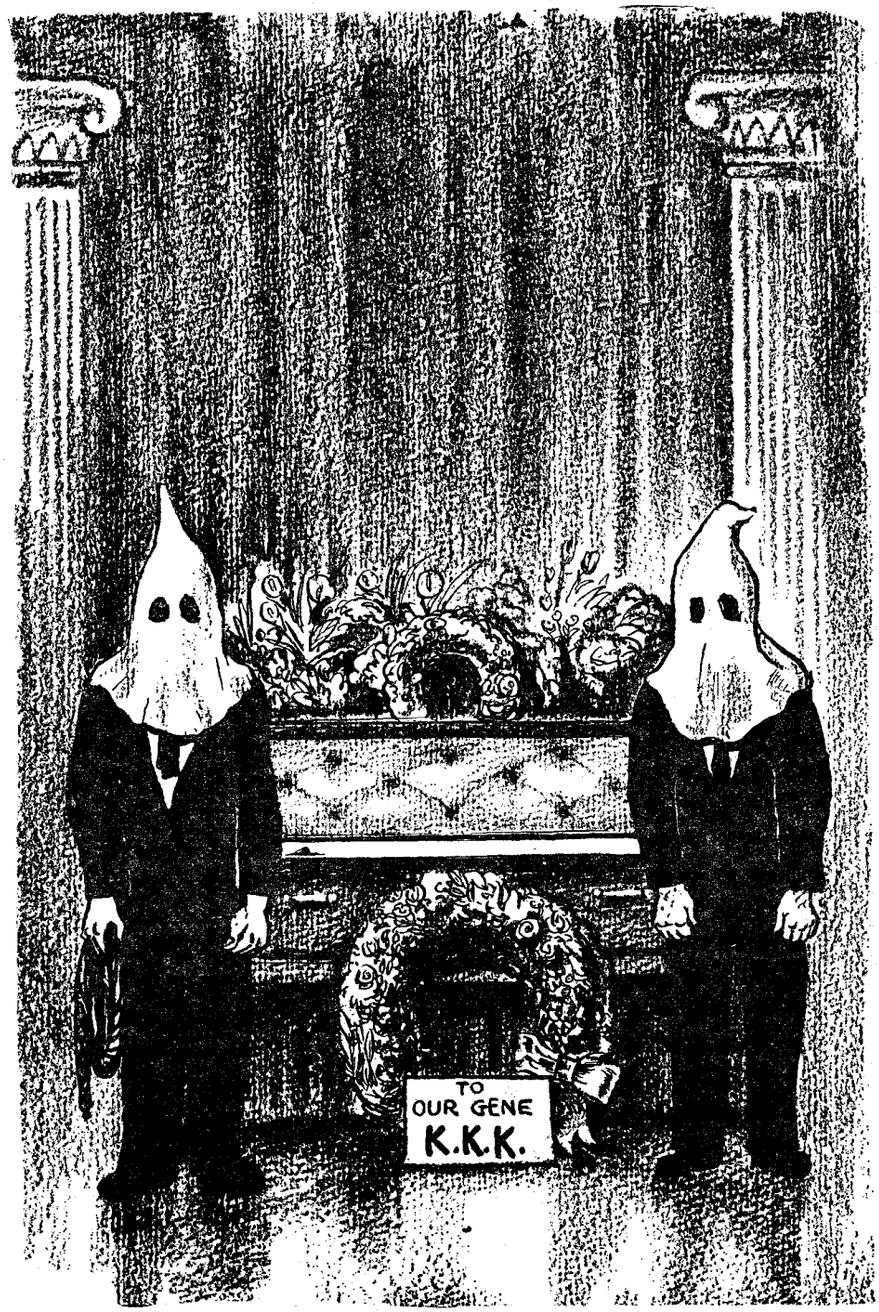
For my money, the only reference that bore specific pertinence to Our Gene's career appeared in a quotation, in the lengthy obit, from Governor Arnall's campaign speech: "This state has been given a national black eye, and I'm out to break the Hitler pattern." In all fairness, too, the *Tribune* did say that Gene "got into a jam with organized labor when, in the textile strikes in 1934, Mr. Talmadge called out 3,700 National Guardsmen who seized pickets and put them into an open concentration camp without trial." The newspaper all but said that Our Gene was quite a card.

I recalled the time I spent an hour with Talmadge in the Governor's Mansion in Atlanta, and the way his secretary beamed, after our interview, as she laid down a copy of *American Astrology* which she had been studying and asked me how I liked "Our Gene." "The People's Friend, we call him," she said enthusiastically, and handed me a copy of his newspaper—*The Statesman*. The masthead read:

EDITOR: THE PEOPLE
ASSOCIATE EDITOR:
EUGENE TALMADGE

A tattered Confederate flag draped his anteroom and I had to wait an hour for him, because, as he apologized, he had to adjudicate a case of bastardy. Yes, quite a card, Gene Talmadge.

Yet I think the most pertinent thing to say about Gene was that he admired Hitler and that he had, in his mind's eye, a state modeled after Der



Arthur Schwartz.

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Fuehrer's, and that he was, therefore, no mere bush-leaguer, but a man with a well-defined *Weltanschauung*, and that he operated out of impulses more than reminiscent of *Mein Kampf*. So far as one man could he sought to transform Georgia into the image of the Third Reich. He made pretty fair headway.

I shall never forget the impression he made on me: that when you cut through the consciously contrived folksiness, you came to a hard, fascist core. I have looked up my notes that I saved from my trip to Georgia then, and I believe they might make something of a fit epitaph to this phenomenon which is Gene Talmadge. As I reread them, I am more than certain we would be naive if we considered him a mere ignoramus, possessing merely the foxiness of a backwoods kulak. He knew what he was doing: he knew he was good for the vested interests of Georgia and they knew it. I cannot overlook the full-page photograph-of-the-week in a recent copy of Luce's magazine, *Life*, taken during Talmadge's past electoral campaign. A debutante, in her boudoir, was primping in front of her mirror, preparing to go out and do some electioneering, and on the well-appointed walls of her room hung a banner, like a college pennant, which read, "Talmadge for Governor." There was nothing of the "wool-hat" about her. She knew what she was doing, and so did Gene.

PERHAPS my notes would be of interest today, and I pass them on to you:

"Our Gene did not have his traditional red suspenders on when we talked things over in his office today but he did flourish his best back-state accent, dropped his G's and swanned and goshed for the best part of an hour. However, the sense of his talk was clear. He did think a heap of Hitler and Mussolini for they are strong men and they must be 'he'pin' their people or their people wouldn't have them. Ain't it so? And besides, he doesn't believe all this ol' stuff about Hitler persecutin' Jewry. Shucks, Hitler ain't so small as to do a thing like that. . . ."

This was back in 1935 and Huey Long's body had not been mouldering long in his grave. Gene got around to his friend Huey in our talk and he passed on a few observations of his neighbor from Mississippi. "The governor," my notes say, "spoke about a lot of other things, chiefly anecdotal, about what a swell guy his pal Huey Long had been and how they had drawn lots down there to murder Huey and how that Dr. Weiss had pulled the short one. Huey was honest and a fine pal but his idea of guvment was exactly opposite to Gene's. 'He believed in all guvment, top-heavy guvment and I'm fundamentally a Jeffersonian Democrat. I believe in least guvment and most liberty for the people. Let them work out their own destiny. They will.' He said Huey was struck down something like Caesar and that when a man's time comes, nothing he will do can halt it, neither bodyguards nor suits of armor will help. Although he, Gene, thought he had a way, which once he'ped him. Look the would-be assassin in the eye, alone, and the assassin will retreat. It works. Once happened to him. Fella came in here with a forty-five and wanted $200 he said state flim-flammed him out of. He'd give Gene twenty-four hours to get him the money or else. That's fair enough, I says to him. You just come in my anteroom here and wait them twenty-four hours. Gene ushered him into the anteroom and the man waited eighteen hours and then went home."

"Did you pay him the $200?" I asked.

"I did not," the governor of Georgia replied.

THE Georgia chain-gang had, at that time, come in for a great deal of withering comment in the national forum, and we talked about that too. I asked Talmadge his response to the attacks delivered at the convention of the criminologists that chanced to be taking place in Atlanta while I was there. William B. Cox, head of the Osborne Association, had assailed "the public degradation that comes in working men on public highways, often in shackles and stripes." Dr. Nathaniel Cantor, professor of criminal law at Buffalo University, had minced no words. "The Georgia chain-gangs," he said, "are probably the most bestial elements in the American prison system."

I refer to my notes again:

"Well, I said what I thought about that at the convention," Talmadge replied. Here is what Gene said there:

"The change in environment and work of the prison camp or chain-gang is one of the most humane ways to keep prisoners. A good whipping in a man's own county and town would work better than detention in the smaller crimes such as gaming and wife-beating."

I asked the governor how small a crime he felt wife-beating was. He said that depends on how hard you hit her.

When I said that reminds me of Hitler, who says woman's place is in the kitchen, he replied that he thought Hitler was a mighty fine man. "Course, I don't know for sure," he said, suddenly cagey, his eyes gleaming at me through his spectacles, "I ain't ever been in Germany, but folks I know been there and they think a good deal of Hitler. Why, the man must be he'pin' his people or they'd put him out. Ain't it so?"

But, then, he said, returning to the chain-gang, "I've got a few friends who know a heap more about that than I do. They'll be up in a minute." He bade me discuss this matter with the experts, and sent out for a Coca-Cola.

A Mr. J. P. McCleskey arrived, bright-eyed and apple-cheeked, and I was introduced as a gentleman from the North. The governor's friend had been in charge of chain-gangs "goin' on seventeen year." And a moment later, Mr. A. A. Clarke, Jr., superintendent of Public Works of Fulton County, showed up. Chain-gangs were under his personal supervision. They argued the merits of chain-gangs. Then I asked about corporal punishment.

"Ain't none now," said Mr. Clarke, "save for the stocks. We cut out the lash years ago."

My notes tell me Mr. McCleskey became nostalgic. "The lash," he said, "was the most humane damn punishment there was." Mr. Clarke put his hand on Mr. McCleskey's knee.

"I don't quite agree with you, there, Mr. McCleskey," he said. "The stock's much more suitable." Mr. McCleskey put his hand on Mr. Clarke's knee.

"That's where we differ," he said politely.

Mr. Clarke spoke up sharply. "The stocks," he said, "is the finest damn punishment ever invented." That sounded final and he was in charge of chain-gangs. But Mr. McCleskey was politely obstinate. "The lash," he said dreamily, "the lash. Two or three licks with it and I never did have any more trouble for a month or mo' in my gangs."

The governor intervened. "Now

(*Continued on page 25*)

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It's Love and Love Alone

By CHARLES HUMBOLDT

ELIZABETH INTENDS TO MARRY PHILIP BUT TROTH IS DELAYED

ENGAGEMENT OF PRINCESS TO GREEK PRINCE IS DELAYED BECAUSE OF THE SITUATION IN HIS HOMELAND, LONDON SOURCES SAY

New York Times, Dec. 16, 1946.

WE ARE happy to print the following scene, written especially for NEW MASSES on the above occasion, by Great Britain's foremost playwright, Mr. William Shakespeare.

ELIZABETH'S *chamber.*

Enter PHILIP *and* ELIZABETH *at the window.*

ELIZABETH

Wilt thou be gone? it is not yet near day:
It was the Bevin, not the Gallacher,
That pierced the fearful hollow of thine ear;
Nightly he sings on yond Iranian tree:
Believe me, love, it was the Bevin bird.

PHILIP

It was the Willy, herald of the morn,
No Ernie: please observe what reddish streaks
Do lace the severing clouds in yonder east:
Night's candles are burnt out and foul brigands
Make trouble on the misty mountain tops.
I must convert my crown or live on you.

ELIZABETH

Yond light is not daylight, I know it, I:
It is some revelation of the Press,
To be to thee this night a comforter,
And light thee on thy way to Attica:
Therefore stay yet,—thou need'st not yet abscond.

PHILIP

Let me be ta'en, let me be put to death;
I am content, so thou wilt have it so.
I'll say yon Greece is not the Greece I know,
'T'is but a slander of the Slavic hordes;
Nor that is not the Truth whose notes do beat
The awkward situation in the *Times*:
I'd rather stay but think I'd better go:—
Come, death, and welcome, Lizzy wills it so.—
How is't, my soul? let's talk—all is O.K.

ELIZABETH

It's not, it's not,—hie hence, be gone, away!
It *is* the Redbreast sings so out of tune,
Straining harsh discords and unpleasing sharps.
Some say that Red makes sweet divisions;
This doth not so, for he divideth us:
Some say that Red and loathed toad change eyes;
O, now I would they had changed voices too!
Since arm from arm that voice doth us affray,
Hunting thee hence with hunt's-up to the day.
O, now be gone; more light and light it grows.

PHILIP

More light and light,—more dark and dark our woes!

Enter NURSE

What goes on here?

ELIZABETH

What's up?

NURSE

Your mama's hoofing it right over here
And you (*to* PHILIP) may soon be broke, just like the day.
[*Exit.*

ELIZABETH

Then, window, let day in and let Phil out.

PHILIP

Farewell, farewell; ten quid, and I'll descend. [*He goeth down.*

ELIZABETH

Art thou gone so? my lord! my love! my friend?
I must hear from thee every day in the hour,
For in a minute there are many days:
O, by this count I shall be much in years
Ere I again behold my Philipo!

PHILIP

Farewell!
I will omit no opportunity
That may bring law and order to our bed.

ELIZABETH

O, think'st thou we shall ever meet again?

PHILIP

It will depend on circumstances quite
Beyond my own control, be sure of that.

ELIZABETH

O God, I have an ill-divining soul!
Methinks I see thee, now thou art below,
A Humpty Dumpty, tumbled off a throne;
Either my eyesight fails, or thou look'st pale.

PHILIP

And trust me, love, in my eye so do you:
Though healthier than I. Adieu, adieu! [*Exit below.*

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HOUSE-WRECKING IN WASHINGTON

While four million veterans are looking for homes, the GOP termites, abetted by Truman, are undermining rent controls and low-cost housing.

By VIRGINIA GARDNER

Washington.

WHEN President Truman let Housing Expediter Wilson Wyatt go and quite literally threw the veterans' housing program to the wolves, he greatly enhanced the possibilities for legislative repeal of rent control. He showed how slim the chances of his vetoing such a measure would be. And by raising the $10,000 sales ceiling on new homes, and upping monthly rentals in new housing so that instead of a maximum rent of $80 in any project there can now be apartments at any rents so long as the project averages $80, he has given encouragement to those pressing for the abolition of all price controls over new housing. Naturally if controls over new housing go, rent control over old housing becomes much more difficult.

Nevertheless, the Republicans are aware that rent control still is a very hot potato. Some of them are afraid to touch it, at least directly. Therefore there will be an effort to attack it more subtly in the new Congress. One move will be to send rent control back to the states. With state legislatures even more amenable to the high pressure real estate lobbies than individual members of Congress, their job would be simpler. The more "liberal" wing in the Republican Party will be aided by one of the co-authors of that bill which the National Association of Real Estate Boards calls "socialized housing," the Wagner-Ellender-Taft bill. It is significant, of course, that the bill was stopped in the House. Sen. Robert A. Taft (R., O.), who is posing as a "moderate" these days, never really put up much of a fight behind the scenes for the bill or it would have gone farther. But while Senator Taft for the last two years has been espousing this important though very mild legislation, and making good public statements on it, and being feted and photographed baring his teeth chummily at public housing enthusiasts, Senator-elect John W. Bricker of Ohio has remained true, publicly and privately, to the NAREB.

Therefore it is to be expected that while the GOP "liberals" drive toward returning rent control to the states, as they will phrase it, the NAREB will not lack for clarion voices in the Senate calling for an end to regimentation and rent control. Sen. Kenneth Wherry, the jovial undertaker from Nebraska, who was minority whip of the Senate in the 79th Congress, called for the end of rent control before he departed on his one-man mission to Europe. Now that he is back muttering about the "iron curtain" we can expect him to resume his campaign, for he has energy enough to attack the Soviet Union and the consumers of America at the same time. This less subtle sort of campaign to end rent control doubtless will have the aid of Senator Bricker, long the special favorite of the building industry lobby, Rep. Fred A. Hartley of New Jersey, who worked closely with NAREB on the Smith committee when it was attacking rent control, Sen. Albert W. Hawkes of New Jersey, and others.

"US Senator-elect John W. Bricker," read a modest news item of November 21, "yesterday told the Ohio Home Builders' Association that it is a 'constant battle to keep the masses from overthrowing everything we stand for'." It went on to say that Senator Bricker "asserted the government must turn home building back to private enterprise."

Despite all Mr. Truman has done to please the building industry, however, it is not enough for the boys. If anything were needed to prove that there is no appeasing these specimens of virtuous private enterprise, it is the December 21 *Washington Letter* of the National Association of Home Builders. After first praising Truman and his new housing expediter and expediter-administrator, the NAHB is completely disillusioned. The new crowd has let them down. The builders are indignant. Why? Because they are not going to be able to add on a few thousand dollars as a sale price for the houses now in process of being built. The rules still apply on these. "While the industry is grateful that the HH priority system and all of its attendant evils is abandoned on new housing from now on," NAHB says, "builders caught in the middle of constructing some 400,000 houses are tremendously disturbed." The irony is that with all their griping because controls are not discontinued entirely, the builders are getting nervous, too. They have but a year, maybe two, they figure, until the crest is reached.

The story of meat prices has shown that consumers will refuse to buy when prices go up beyond reason. Land values are already considered at peak. In an industry which has never developed beyond a primitive and chaotic condition, the builders fear a repetition of what happened after the last war, when new construction zoomed up to a peak of some twelve billion (in current dollars) in 1925, then dropped steeply to about two and one-half billion dollars in 1933. The result will be that the homes which are needed will not be built unless a tremendous campaign for public and non-profit mutual-ownership housing is waged.

THE November report of the Veterans' Emergency Housing Program shows that the total number of housing units, including temporary, conversion and trailer housing, for the full year 1946, based on current rate of construction, will reach one million. The VEHP goal was 1,200,000. This is not completed housing, however. At the end of October completions were only 500,400, of which only 341,200 were new permanent homes and apartments.

Right now the rat race is on. With building materials priorities already ended, and Mr. Truman's stated increase of allotted commercial construction from $35,000,000 a month to $50,000,000 admittedly being only the beginning, these limitations to be "relaxed or dropped as rapidly as the

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situation permits," who will get what is a toss-up. With commercial or nonresidential housing far and away the more profitable, the small contractors will be squeezed out and the would-be homeowner or apartment-renter will continue to be outside looking in.

The new housing expediter, Frank R. Creedon, is the same Creedon who was one of those in the Civilian Production Administration who were involved in holding up the original order to ban nonresidential housing. As a result, vast amounts of it got under the wire. Since it was begun before the deadline, with a "leak" giving builders plenty of warning and the actual order coming through haltingly after it was announced, commercial building topped noncommercial in volume up until August.

After nonresidential construction had to be approved by CPA, it was lenient with those who had a head start. In May CPA allowed 675 million dollars in such construction. Total through October was $2.1 billion, with $1.6 billion denied, and in October, approvals again exceeded denials, as they had in May. Under the present conditions, without priorities, without any orderly allocation of building materials, racetracks and night clubs will get them just as fast or faster than home builders.

And on the day which saw Creedon issuing the formal order which Truman had announced ending priorities, while the OPA Consumer Advisory Committee resigned with a final plea that "the efforts of real estate and landlords to wreck rent controls be resisted firmly," the American Legion issued a plaintive plea. In the same letter which told Mr. Truman how much the Legion liked his "program," the Legion's national commander, Paul H. Griffith, hoped that nonhousing construction "will be commensurate with the supply of building materials and labor" and not allowed to interfere with veterans' housing. This is as colossal a piece of humbug and fraud as Truman's own statement that he was determined that a "vigorous housing program" be carried out in 1947. It will be a vigorous program for luxury home builders, but not for veterans. The Legion hierarchy is as responsible for what other veterans' groups called the "scuttling" of veterans' housing as any other lobby. After backing the Wagner-Ellender-Taft bill before a Congressional committee, the Legion reversed itself. But not the membership. All the realtors' pressure failed to get a resolution through the Legion convention calling for Wyatt's resignation. So a "committee" was appointed which held elaborate "hearings" in Washington, drew up a report which delighted NAREB, and the executive board "accepted" it. But even it still called for channeling of materials.

THE lobby which shouted hurrahs at Wyatt's exit and, before he disappointed the industry, acclaimed Creedon, long a big-time industrial engineer, is made up of three parts of an axis. Quiet but powerful is the Producers' Council, representing the big corporations such as Johns Manville, Owens Glass, and many others. The second most important part is the National Association of Real Estate Boards, whose executive vice president, Herbert U. Nelson, is a smooth lobbyist who lets the noisiest and least important part of the axis do much of his public work. This is the National Association of Home Builders, a creation of the NAREB.

The NAHB consists mostly of small contractors, who are the bulk of those building homes. They are little business. Eager for immediate profit, they do not see that their interests do not lie with NAREB and the Producers' Council and their program. But they are accustomed to scarcity production. Two or three homes a year is a lot of building for them. They go up to the Federal Housing Administration offices, I am told, take off their hats and thumb around the inside of their hat bands for their figures and their plans. They are little more

Henry Boyd.

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than carpenters, and next to the veterans, they are going to be the first to suffer when the housing now under way is completed. But they have been extremely vocal. And they were among the groups cheering Wyatt's departure.

TIPOFF on the "vigorous housing program" of Mr. Truman's, which actually is a betrayal of the veteran and a consigning of veterans to second-hand or slum homes, is its section on rental housing. Mr. Truman in his December 14 statement declared, "More family units must be made available for rent to veterans. They should not be compelled to buy in order to get shelter." While he mentions using "all available means," including conversion and re-use housing, all the program for temporary and re-use housing provided for by Congress is under way, about half of it completed. In 1947, therefore, this type of rental housing, which upped the total forty-five percent in 1946, will not be forthcoming. "The great bulk of this task will fall upon private enterprise," he admits, and then declares, "We are aiding private enterprise by simplifying and reducing various priority controls and by the measures taken to increase availability of materials." This will not fool many veterans. But then he makes the plausible-sounding statement that financial measures are planned to "encourage the construction of rental housing." With that, he announced he was making available to Federal Housing Administration the second billion dollars provided for in the Patman emergency housing act under Title VII, for insured mortgage financing.

SKUNKCABBAGE BY ANY OTHER NAME

An Editorial by JOSEPH FOSTER

THE new movie version of *Abie's Irish Rose* is a blatant, vulgar caricature of the Jews and the Irish. Its Jewish characters are lawyers and merchants who have lived in America for over twenty-five years, who have escaped the ghetto into substantial houses and morning coats, yet who shriek at the mention of ham and the sight of Christmas trees, confuse Christmas bells with fire alarms, gesticulate with extended arms ending in upturned palms, punctuate their speech with neck-disappearing shoulder shrugs, measure everything ostentatiously by price and cost, and use every threadbare gesture of the stage Jew stereotype. In a similar nauseating manner, the Irish are hod-carriers and scrubwomen, as though these occupations were a disgrace, and as though they were incapable of anything else. No trick of behavior or dialogue that perpetuates the joke-book myths of both people is overlooked, with the calculated result of further entrenching the hate-breeding shibboleths among both the Irish and the Jews.

When the play opened, almost a quarter of a century ago, it was even then held to be a senseless travesty on those involved. Critics and commentators to a man condemned it for its cheap distortion of reality. How much more objectionable is it today, when millions of Jews and Catholics alike have been sacrificed to a program of racial antagonism, and when a man's humanity must be measured by his attitude on interracial harmony? This film goes much beyond bad taste and painful stage jokes. It presupposes that enmity between Jew and Irishman, Hebrew and Catholic, is normal, natural and inevitable. Thus the mixed marriage between Abie and Rosemary creates violent antagonisms from which humor of universal meaning is supposed to flow. Worse, the rabbi and the priest, the exponents of the faiths represented, accept the inevitability of the quarrel. They remonstrate gently and smile indulgently over the antics of their "children." As children fight over a toy, so must these men of lesser intelligence wrangle because of their different beliefs. Human nature is human nature, they smugly agree. From them comes not a single word of understanding or enlightenment. Supporters of the film (stooges for the producers) attempt to point out that reconciliation and good will finally triumph, thus establishing the fact that mixed marriages are no evil in civilized society and only love counts, but such a claim is hogwash. The yapping fathers-in-law are united only in a common misfortune when one of the offspring swallows a hook. But when tranquillity is restored, the same lack of understanding reappears.

Directly to blame is Bing Crosby, whose new production company chose to stir up this old pail of sheep-dip for its first feature. *Abie's Irish Rose*, with a long run, a revival and a silent movie to give it a long life, was figured as an easy touch for the new company. Thus the first and last consideration of Crosby and his pals was the making of a fast and easy buck. I doubt that Crosby wanted to add to the total of anti-Semitism in America. I am also positive that he is a doting father and that he is kindly disposed toward people. But as a movie producer he acts the type to the last dime. If the selection of this film proves anything, it reveals the utter cynicism that producers display toward film audiences. Consideration of people is their last concern. As against an occasional worry over what people might want, usually voiced by a newcomer, there is the overwhelming derision by the industry bosses, large and small, for such amateur feelings.

Well, the people have the power to show this gentry that such an attitude can be fatal, and *Abie's Irish Rose* offers an excellent opportunity to put that power to work. Continuous picketlines in front of every theater that exhibits the film, letters of protest to United Artists for distributing it and to Bing Crosby Productions, Hollywood, for producing it, and an absolute box-office boycott will send this Ann Nichols monsterpiece back to the garbage heap from which it never should have been disinterred.

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The truth is that only a fraction of the original billion has been spent. Month in and month out Wyatt's office has emphasized the need for more rental housing. The builders have not taken advantage of the opportunity to insure ninety percent mortgage loans. Because of rent control they could not make the high profits they demanded in rental housing, and chances are they will continue their strike against building rental housing, hoping thereby to kill all remaining controls.

Of the 820,000 priority authorizations for new homes and apartments which FHA had approved to private homebuilders in non-farm areas by the end of October, and of 102,000 authorizations for converted units, only 305,000 were to be placed on the rental market. How many were new and how many converted was not revealed in the VEHP report. But the veteran who wanted to rent at less than $50 a month (a Bureau of the Census survey in June showed that the average monthly rental veterans are able to pay is $43) had only one-third of the new rentals available. That means that less than 100,000 units rented at under $50. And in June there were 4,000,000 veterans who wanted new homes within a year, of which thirty percent wanted to rent. But only 2,200,000 wanted to build or rent under present price levels, and of that number, half wanted to rent. The average weekly income of prospective renters was $44, of prospective buyers, $48.

TIME was in this country when Congress did not lift an eyebrow at "socialized housing." In a history of the Medico-Chirurgical Society of the District of Columbia, Dr. W. Montague Cobb quotes from a history of the Sixties of the last century. Free schools for Negroes and the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia were responsible for a big influx of colored families, and by 1870 there were about 30,000 in the District. They "squatted," and "took possession of vacant houses and vacated barracks wherever found."

" 'The Federal government . . . erected near the Capitol, houses and sold them on easy terms for cost; it purchased 375 acres of land on the Potomac' "—this was near or on the site of the encampment of unemployed during the Hoover hunger march days —" 'and erected houses on one-acre lots and sold them for cost (1867). It opened soup houses for the 26,357 Negroes who were idle—idle, for only 5,192 of the 31,549 in Washington and Georgetown were gainfully employed during 1866, and because 22,798 were patients in the government hospitals that year. . . .' "

The Wagner-Ellender-Taft bill

Harari.

John W. Bricker

provides for low-rent public housing for 125,000 family units a year for four years—only one-tenth of the housing supply if private industry manages to supply the rest of the 1,250,000 houses needed a year, Sen. Allen J. Ellender has said. It is not enough. And the bill is only a bill to date. Passed by the Senate with few dissenting votes, it was filibustered in the House Banking Committee until hearings were abandoned near the end of Congress. The main Congressmen blocking it were Rep. Jesse Wolcott of Michigan, one of the foremost Republican leaders in the House and slated to be the new head of the committee, and Reps. Howard Buffett (R., Neb.) and Frederick C. Smith (R., O.).

What about the prospects for industrialized (prefabricated) low-cost housing by private enterprise? Before Wyatt's resignation, which was forced by the immediate issue of Reconstruction Finance Corporation loans to industrialized housing outfits, his office had forced RFC to put up eighty percent of the capital needed to finance a company. Originally RFC's policy was: you put up a dollar and we will. Now RFC policy again will be restricted. Actually industrialized housing represented no threat to established building methods. Legally, before Wyatt could direct RFC to issue a loan he had to make a finding that it would not have impeded established building forms.

To date only one corporation, in Ohio, actually is acting as prefabricator and assembler, offering the consumer a finished house, put up on land, an entire operation with only one profit markup, eliminating the many customary cuts along the way to "middlemen." In general, however, prefabricators have not passed along the profit-saving to consumers. Despite "vigorous encouragement through guaranteed markets and financing aid for the development of industrialized housing and new-type materials," cited by the November report of Wyatt's office, only four guaranteed-market contracts as allowed under the Patman Act had been signed. Apparently, despite all the incentives offered private industry, it will not do the job of providing factory-built low-cost homes.

President Truman promised that studies of proposed new legislation would be concluded quickly and would cover cooperative and mutual housing enterprises, and federal aid for housing low-income families. Under VEHP a number of veterans' groups throughout the country have obtained private backing and formed veterans' housing cooperatives. Under the Wagner-Ellender-Taft bill the especially liberal terms would be provided for these groups, and various unions are excited over the possibilities of such activity. Under the war housing program eight projects for mutual ownership were built, and five of these have exercised their rights under the commitment to extend the ownership into the post-war period.

In certain cities CIO groups and other organizations have aided in obtaining action modifying antiquated building codes, and in others have started movements to extend apprentice-training programs—one of the urgent needs today. Almost nothing has been done nationally, however, to integrate the skills of Negro veterans in these programs.

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A DIP INTO THE FUTURE

A Guest Editorial by RALPH J. PETERS

THE first annual report of the President's Council of Economic Advisers has pleased everybody who is anybody, from the National Association of Manufacturers to the editorial ghosts of the New York *Times*. It remains to see what it means to the ordinary people of America.

But first, a quick look at the origins of the council. It is the abortive result of the same operation that chopped the word "full" out of the Full Employment Act. Its members were chosen in the same spirit; they are perfect clinical specimens of academic schizophrenia—the type of men who have never made a definite decision in their lives, who never say or do a thing one minute without taking it back the next. They are the original "no one would for a moment suggest —but we cannot ignore" boys. Their multitudinous appeals to "reason," to "common sense," to "good sense," to "intelligence," make you dizzy. The matted prose, the insistent self-contradiction, the morass of saving clauses in their first report would make screaming burlesque; but the subject happens to be painful.

It is nothing more or less than the question of the next depression. If abracadabra could exorcize the next depression like toad juice removes warts in a graveyard at midnight, then the eminent council has made a good try. But unfortunately things don't work like that. Inflation, falling wages, stupendous profits are facts, here and now, working every day toward the next depression. And it was just these crude facts that the council chose to ignore completely. Here is a sample of its style:

"In a word, then, our view as to the outlook for production and jobs is that it should be more than ordinarily favorable for a period of some years ahead. In spite of certain conditions that might make a dip in 1947, we believe that courageous and sensible action by those responsible for the administration of private business relations (including labor unions) can at least hold such a recession to moderate proportions if not avert it. . . ." So it goes—by the yard. The future is "favorable" but we might have a "dip" which we might be able to "avert" if we are all good little boys and girls, etc., etc.

It is a noteworthy point that in the course of its incantations the council loses no opportunity to decry progressive economic ideas. For instance, it takes a snide swipe at what it pleases to call government competition with employers in the labor market; it seems that payment under the GI Bill of Rights of $65 per month to veterans at school constitutes unkind competition to the employers who would much prefer to have all veterans forced into the labor market at their complete mercy. This, by the way, is one of the few statements in the entire report that is not contradicted in the next sentence. One other place where the council was able to overcome its penchant for self-contradiction is the flat statement that there is no present need for "public works, consumer or producer subsidies to quicken employment or stimulate production."

The council admits that the present boom is based on pent-up demand and upon shortages that developed during the war. It admits that this is a temporary and artificial situation that "might" contain possibilities of a depression, but it leaves the future to "common sense." And even a New York *Times* editorial writer can figure out for himself that the only kind of "common sense" wanted is for labor to refrain from making wage demands.

In his press conference introducing this gem of economic analysis, Mr. Truman blithely announced that there would be no "recession" in 1947. This brought forth a remark from one of the reporters that the Council of Economic Advisers noted the possibility of a "dip" in 1947. There ensued a good-humored contretemps which raised grave doubt whether the President had even read the report. He finally conceded that he had not familiarized himself with "all" aspects of the report. This is in the grand tradition of burlesque, but, I repeat, the subject is painful.

FOR those who take a deep interest in the economic welfare of our country, it is a relief to turn from the frivolous attitude of the government to the statesmanlike analysis and report prepared by Robert Nathan for the CIO. "A National Wage Policy for 1947" deals with current problems in concrete and factual style. Do we want a repetition of 1929, with its mass unemployment, its staggering economic and social losses, its dangerous potentialities? Then we must understand where present trends are heading. In the period since the war ended, real wages have fallen drastically, but profits have kept right on climbing. This spells danger. We must check this growing maldistribution in national income. And then reducing the argument to facts and figures, the Nathan Report indicates how industry could absorb a general wage increase of twenty-five per cent, without raising prices, and still enjoy profits substantially above the pre-war level.

Yes, this is a fresh breath of air, after smothering in the involutions of the Economic Advisers' redundant and meaningless meanderings. But there is a significance that we cannot ignore in the very existence of the Council of Economic Advisers. It may have constituted itself as a sort of "Prosperity Around the Corner, Inc." to parrot on every and all occasions the phrase made famous by a certain elder statesman, but still the very existence of this body is a slight concession to the strong will of the people for full employment and for government action to curb the ravages of the capitalist cycle of booms and busts. And it is a tacit admission that pure undiluted private enterprise will not and cannot ensure full employment to our country. The American people, for their own safety, need to give full support to labor's wage demands and to its fight against the repressive anti-labor legislation now being prepared for the new Congress.

And the American people need to insist too that the Truman administration and Congress enact a large-scale public works program, expanded social security and other measures that can provide some protection when the new depression hits us.

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FIVE POEMS

by Paul Eluard

Translated by Lloyd Alexander

Paul Eluard is one of the leading poets of France. A member of the Communist Party, Eluard's resistance work in his art helped materially in the mobilization of the patriot forces who opposed and finally defeated the Germans. Eluard has done much in his work to widen the formal horizons of poetry.

The Work of the Poet

to Guillevic

I

The fine ways of being with the others
On the bare grass in summer
Beneath white clouds

The fine ways of being with women
In a hot grey house
Under a transparent sheet

The fine ways of being with one's self
Before the white leaf

Beneath the menace of impotency
Between two times two spaces

Between weariness and the madness of living.

II

What did you come to take
In the familiar chamber

A book which no one ever opens

What did you come to say
To the indiscreet woman

What cannot be repeated

What did you come to see
In this place so well in view

What blindmen see.

III

The road is short
One arrives quickly
At the stones of color
Then
At empty stone

One arrives quickly
At the equal words
At the weightless words
Then
Words without succession
To speak having nothing to say
We have passed beyond the dawn
And it is not day
And it is not night
Nothing it is the echo of an endless step.

IV

One year one far-off day
A walk the beating heart
The countryside prolonged
Our words and gestures
The pathway left us
Trees made us great
And we calmed the precipice

And we were really there
Ruling all warmth
All useful clarity

It was there we sang
The world was intimate
It was there we loved

A crowd preceded us

A crowd followed us
We wandered singing
As always when time
Counts no more nor men
And the heart repents itself
And the heart frees itself.

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V

And even a longer time ago
I was alone
And I still tremble at it

O simple solitude
O negatrice of charming chance
I confess I knew you

I confess to having been abandoned
And I confess even
Abandoning those I loved

In the course of years all came to order
As a harmony of lights
On a river of brightness
As the sails of ships
In fair protective weather
As flames in the fire
To establish warmth

In the course of years again I found you
O presence unlimited
Volume space of love

Multiplied.

VI

I am the twin of beings that I love
Their double in nature and the best of proof
Of their truth I save the face
Of those I chose to justify myself

They are numerous they are innumerable
They go through the streets for them and me
They bear my name I bear their own
We are the like fruits of a tree

Greater than nature and than all the proofs.

VII

I know because I say it
That all my desires are right
I will not have us passing
Through the mire
I want the sunlight to react
Upon our sorrows to animate us
Vertiginously
I want our hands and eyes
To return from horror open and pure

I know because I say it
That my rage is right
The sky has been downtrodden the flesh of man
Cut into tiny pieces
Frozen obedient and dispersed
I want him to be given justice
A justice without pity
I want the butchers struck full in the face
The rootless masters among us

I know because I say it
That my despair is wrong
Everywhere there are soft bellies
To invent men
Like unto me
My pride is not wrong
The old world cannot touch me I am free
I am no king's son I am a man
Still standing where they would have struck me down.

(1946.)

* * *

The Last Night

I

This murderous little world
Is oriented toward the innocent
Takes the bread from his mouth
And gives his house to the flames
Takes his coat and his shoes
Takes his time and his children

This murderous little world
Confounds the dead and living
Whitens the mud pardons traitors
And transforms the word to noise

Thanks midnight twelve rifles
Restore peace to the innocent
And it is for the multitudes to bury
His bleeding flesh his black sky
And it is for the multitudes to understand
The frailty of murderers.

II

The wonder would be a light push against the wall
It would be being able to shake this dust
It would be to be united.

III

They had skinned his hands bent his back
They had dug a hole in his head
And to die he had to suffer
All his life.

IV

Beauty created for the happy
Beauty you run a great risk

These hands crossed on your knees
Are the tools of an assassin

This mouth singing aloud
Serves as a beggar's bowl

And this cup of pure milk
Becomes the breast of a whore.

V

The poor picked their bread from the gutter
Their look covered light
No longer were they afraid at night

So weak their weakness made them smile
In the depths of their shadow they carried their body
They saw themselves only through their distress
They used only an intimate language
And I heard them speak gently prudently
Of an old hope big as a hand.

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I heard them calculate
The multiplied dimensions of the autumn leaf
The melting of the wave on the breast of a calm sea
I heard them calculate
The multiplied dimensions of the future force.

VI

I am born behind a hideous facade
I have eaten I have laughed I have dreamed I have been ashamed
I have lived as a shadow
Yet I know how to sing the sun
The entire sun who breathes
In every breast and in all eyes
The drop of candor which sparkled after tears.

VII

We throw the faggot of shadows to the fire
We break the rusted locks of injustice
Men will come who will no longer fear themselves
For the enemy with a man's face disappears.

(1942.)

Full in the Month of August

Full in the month of August one tender colored monday evening
One monday evening hanging naked from the clouds
In Paris bright as a fresh egg
Full in the month of August our country at the barricades
Paris daring to show her eyes
Paris daring to cry victory
Full in the month of August one monday evening

Since we have understood light
How shall night fall this evening
Since hope leaps from the pavement
Springs from the faces and the upraised fists
We are going to give hope
We are going to give life
To slaves who once despaired

Full in the month of August we forget the winter
As we forget the politeness of the conquerors
Their grand salutes to misery and death
We forget winter as we forget shame
Full in the month of August we arrange our ammunition
With reason and the reason is our hate
We break with nothing and the break is everything

The sweetness of being alive the sorrow of knowing
Our brothers died that we might live free
For to live and make live is at the bottom of us all
Here is the night here is the mirror of our dreams
Here is midnight point of honor of the night
The sweetness and sorrow of knowing that today
We have together compromised the night.

(1944.)

A Small Number of French Intellectuals Have Placed Themselves in the Service of the Enemy

Frightful frightened
The hour is come to count them
For the end of their reign arrives

They have vaunted their butchers
And detailed evil to us
They have said nothing innocently

Fine words of alliance
They have veiled you with vermin
Their mouth opens on death

But now the hour is come
To love each other to unite with each other
To conquer them to punish them.

(1944.)

In a Black Mirror

Teeming halo
Of days in the most beautiful month of August
In an overcrowded neighborhood

Halo of our wishes
Shimmering with impatience
Hot with our anger

On rue de la Chapelle
The front of a school building
Pocked and lightened with bullets

The only flowers of the street
White with spared flesh
On the walls of misery

All thoughts in flower
All eyes to see clearly
On walls at last sensitive

On rue de la Chapelle
On walls at last marked
By a living imprint

By the desire to be free. (1944.)

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STOCKS AND BONDS AND UNION CARDS

Mighty in their marbled canyon, the big money men are alarmed by the CIO's entry into their domain.

By MILTON BLAU

THE banks are thick along Wall Street. They flank the narrow gutter on both sides, like the sentries in a granite line before the Stock Exchange. In the morning as the hands of the church clock outside the Street move toward the eleventh hour, you half expect to hear a voice rise up from the earth and boom across the world: All's Well! Yet it does not happen. You hear the traffic noises, the sounds of the people as they rush along the sidewalk and spill over hectically into the road, but no voice booming. The air is filled with the anonymity of finance capital and each building, in its marble permanence, seems innocent and ignorant of the name of crime. They sit here in the golden canyon like pirates and swindlers come to church and they smile the smile of virgins.

I am a visitor to the Street. I have no idea of the niceties of banking or finance and my decision to enter Number Two Wall Street in preference to Number One is prompted by the change in traffic lights. Inside the bank the doorway draws a line between sound and silence. Aside from the blue-coated guard the entire floor of the First National Bank is empty. The glass barrier closes the mechanism of banking away. There is the occasional looming of a shadow behind glass when an employe passes inside, and rarer still the glimpse of a human hand where there is an aperture in the bank caging. The bored pacing of the guard reminds me of the throbbing of a furnace in an empty cellar. He is an elderly man whose grey hair is neatly trimmed. He watches me as I walk slowly across the marble floor. It is apparent to him that my purpose in the great First National has nothing to do with banking. He stops me when I walk into whispering range.

"Can I be of any help to you, sir?" he asks.

I don't know quite what to say. Exactly what do I want? It would be of little value to ask the guard about the $715,000,000 held in account here. Nor do I think the guard would like it if I should ask him about some of the 1,200 of the bank's clients. I compromise with my thoughts and reply:

"I am studying bank architecture. I am very much interested in how the First National is put together."

"Certainly!" the guard says with enthusiasm; his voice is above a whisper. "Look around, sir! Gowan upstairs; I think that'll be better."

I walk up the marble staircase and try as best I can to muffle the sound of my shoes. I am the only one in the bank at the moment and I get the uneasy feeling that this is a frame-up, that I am some sort of secret agent who has unwittingly stumbled into a trap. I proceed upward and finally make the landing where the sun shines more brightly and where there is a denser population. There is a tall guard who stands before a low desk on which there is an elaborate signal board; there are three girls in their teens who sit on a leather-cushioned bench to the right of the stairwell; there is a bank officer sitting at a desk on the other side of the low rail barrier. The guard scarcely moves, the girls whisper and steal glances in the direction of the guard, and the banker is talking into a phone. Neither the whispering nor the phone conversation can be heard.

I explain to the guard about my interest in architecture.

"This is really a splendid structure," I say. "Sturdy."

He smiles broadly at this, and while I am not sure, I think at the moment that I detect a blush.

"It's classic federal architecture," he says, and points his jaw at the marble work of the wall which rises from the stair-landing below. "When they put up the new building—that was in 1933, you know—they gave a lot of attention to it."

"Sturdy," I say again. "Really sturdy."

"It ain't like the one across the street." This time his closely shaven jaw points toward the windows of the Irving Trust Company. "They're *modern*."

"Really?"

"Yeah. I don't go in there myself but I can see from here." For a moment he looks across the street to Number One Wall. "They ain't got any cage work in there. They do business over the counter, like a cafeteria."

"You say they have no cages?"

"No. They're *modern*. That's the way it is with them. We're a bankers' bank." He pulls at the knot of his tie. "Cages are important, sir. They're a part of the tradition."

"That's true, they are a part of the tradition, aren't they?" I reply. "A bank should have character."

"We're conservative; that's the way a bank should be." He stabs his jaw across the street again. "Look at them lines! Must be more than a hundred people in there."

"It's not very active in here," I observe with a little profundity. "Business slow?"

THE guard winces this time and scratches his neck. "When we have nine people in here we call it crowded. This is a bankers' bank."

The buzzer sounds on his signal

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board. The guard snaps his fingers in the direction of the girls. "Bookkeeping!" he says. The girl in the grey skirt and white blouse at the end of the bench peels off like a fighter plane and goes tripping down the stairway.

"Banks employ more women than formerly, don't they?"

"Yeah. The war did that. It's been like that since the war."

"Do you think it's better?"

"Some of the men here don't think so, but I think it's better. We've got to allow for change. I think it's better."

"How is that?"

"Well, you know, we used to take on boys just out of high school. They're with us three or four months and they think they know everything — wanna run the bank. I like kids to take orders; after all, they're here to learn."

"There must be a lot to learn in a bank like this."

"Sure; that's what we all feel. We used to like to keep them on this job for a year or so," he nods in the direction of the bench. "It gets them to know the different departments, familiarizes them." The signal board blinked again. The guard snapped his fingers, "Personnel!" the second little girl peeled off. "A kid goes to high school today and he thinks he knows everything. They got no respect for authority any more; they even answer back the teachers. We never did that." The silence becomes thick again.

"It must be pleasant to work here."

"I like it," he says.

"Many people think that it's fine to work for a bank—the hours are good —nine to three."

"A lot they know; field is always greener in someone else's pasture. We work a full day like anyone else." Another guard comes up the stair. He talks for a moment to the man at the signal board and then trots down. "Work hard, too," the guard resumes. "On your feet all day and the special messengers walking all over town; cover more ground than your mailman. People just go around getting ideas about what they don't know."

"I suppose the bank people know the kind of work that's done."

"Sure, they do. In fact they're the first ones to know. They even been giving raises because they feel the cost of living is going up. The officers pay attention to things like that. *We don't have any trouble here.*" I feel that his last remark is in reference to the CIO drive to organize the banking fields and also his assurance to me that the citadel had not yet been breeched.

Then the conversation gets back to the architecture and the guard explains to me about the nature of the woodwork. It is all Honduras mahogany and it had been a great effort for the bank to match all the wood in tone and grain. The desks are also matched. I look over at them. Except for one bank officer, all the other desks are empty. Atop each desk a hat is perched. (The bank officers are at lunch in the private bank restaurant.)

I thanked the guard for his courtesy and went down the stairs and out the doorway.

As I walk down the Street toward the subway I detour for a few moments to step into some of the other banks, the lesser ones, the savings banks. As the First National guard said, they are busy in savings banks. The Irving Trust Company is modern all right; the workers are organizing here as they are in so many other banks and brokerage houses throughout this queen finance city of the world.

The conditions of banking and financial employment have put the more than 100,000 workers in this field into action in their own behalf. Since the Financial Employes' Guild, Local 96, United Office and Professional Workers, opened its drive this past summer, many thousands of the Wall Street and bank workers are finding their way into union ranks. Slowly the grand illusions which have been offered to bank clerks and tellers are being shattered by the deceit of the princes of finance and by the difficult lives endured by their employes.

Bank workers today, like many federal employes and teachers, are double shifting. The teller in your local bank may hold a job as a bouncer in a night club and the small blond at the IBM machine may be selling lingerie in the evenings. Living costs have superseded the personnel laws of the bank which forbid employes to hold outside employment.

The attitude of the bank toward its workers is clearly outlined in one of its typical *Handbooks for Employes.* The little book says: "Every employe should familiarize himself as thoroughly as possible with details of the work of his branch or department so as to be able, in case of need, to fill any position to which he may be assigned." While the bank asks that each worker be proficient in a half dozen different types of skill, it not only does not offer different types of pay for more responsible work but keeps all salaries secret. A worker may, after years of employment, receive less payment than a new worker who is hired in a similar or lesser capacity.

When the banks open flood-gates of Red-baiting on the first signs of organization they are only carrying the inner-sanctum Gestapo policy to its logical conclusion. The little book says on this score: "Our Bank is judged to

a great extent by the conduct of its personnel, and it is important that it be beyond reproach. This applies to a considerable extent even to the employe's life and behavior outside the bank."

Since the wages paid by the banks are ridiculously low the little book urges: "It is of the utmost importance that every employe live within his income, and the Company will consider this a major qualification *for retention in our service.*" (Banks in the New York district earned $274,642,000 after taxes, or a profit of $4,901 per average worker. This profit is 250 percent above the yearly salary of the average employe. It would seem from this that wage raises could be managed

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without hurting the "impoverished" banks too badly. In fact, a profit rate of 150 percent would allow for a good measure of happiness for the financiers and some more bread and butter for the workers.)

The *Handbook for Employes* is a fine document of the suppression of the common civil liberties of the people who work for banks. It is issued by the Manufacturers' Trust Company. On the basis of this sort of tripe we can understand why the workers at Manufacturers' are organizing into the CIO and getting their high-minded banking bosses to sign an old-fashioned union contract.

All the careful planning of the bankers to select personnel whom they can dominate and exploit beyond reason is going to pot because of their own Middle-Ages attitude, because of the growing consciousness of financial workers as to their actual conditions and opportunities, because of the tremendous energy the CIO people have exerted in the once-closed circle of monopoly capital.

It is difficult for the bankers to maintain their doubletalk in face of the union and in face of the facts. Since the union has raised the question of the five-day week for bank workers the banks have themselves begun to move toward this—but on their own terms. It is the banks' idea that they will shorten the week by lengthening the hours of the day or, failing this, to cut salaries together with the work-week.

This sort of maneuvering does not fool the workers any longer. The tellers, clerks and bookkeepers have abundant experience with long hours, during which they work at breakneck speed after the bank has closed its doors and for which they are paid mostly on a straight-time basis. They are beginning to understand that only a union contract, which calls for overtime payment on hours worked in excess of the normal day, can protect them from this willful kind of pinch-penny robbery. The union demand for overtime after seven hours means a lot to them.

Bank workers remember the mass layoffs and pay-cuts of 1929 and the Thirties. At that time the older workers and those with higher salaries were laid off first to permit the company to save money. (Naturally, Winthrop W. Aldrich of Chase National and the Rockefeller clan even in the bleak year of 1933 "earned" $151,744.) In these uneasy days of "boom"—a boom which has slashed their real wages to the bone—the men and women employes of finance are looking to their union to win wage rises and the security of a recognized seniority system.

Many who have devoted years of labor to a bank have too often seen fellow bank employes pensioned off into poverty and insecurity. In this regard the UOPWA is putting up a fight for adequate pensions: a pension (optional at sixty years of age) of half salary, and not less than $100 per month.

The union is on its way toward straightening out the existing wage anarchy in banking houses which permits a nonsensical variation in salaries where new employes are hired at $2,300 a year while an old employe works for the $1,700 at which he started.

The grievances which have piled up among the workers of the finance mart perhaps can be clearly seen if we examine this fact: from 1941-1945 all bank assets doubled, rising from $91,037,000,000 to $178,203,000,000. (During this interim living costs also went up for bank workers; salaries didn't.)

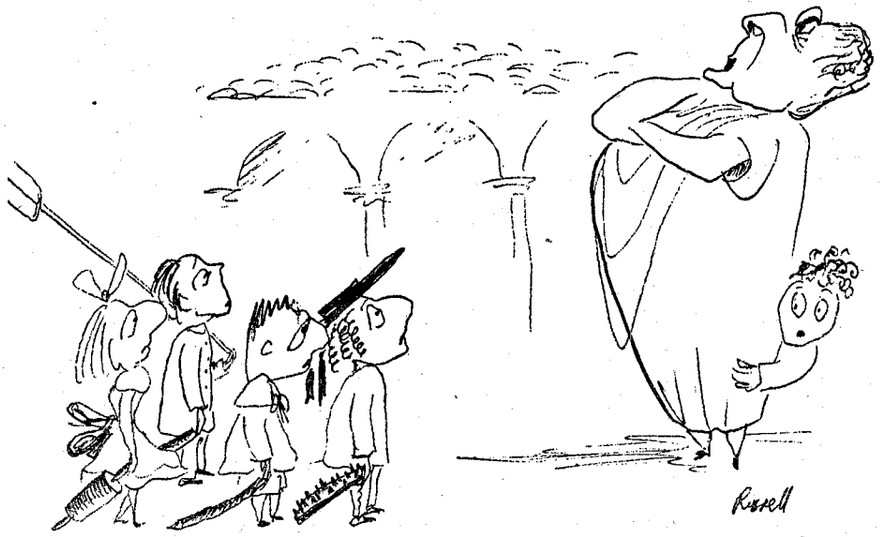
Or we can see the grievance in this way: A bank worker asked his department head for a raise. He was told to bring in an itemized account of how he spent his weekly salary. The supervisor looked it over and advised him to buy less milk and sell his car. No raise.

Reasons like these are bringing financial employes into the UOPWA together with thousands of other white-collar workers.

There are many pieces of unfinished business which the UOPWA has marked on its agenda: first, of course, the complete organization of all financial workers. And in this process the breakdown of the iron-bound discrimination against Negroes, Jews and women. (There are no Negro banking or financial employes. Jews are hired on a token basis. Women are hired at unequal salaries to those of men on similar jobs and are afforded little opportunity for advancement.) Finally, and of great importance, the education of those workers organized in a spirit of democracy in order to shatter the disastrous illusion that financial workers have anything in common with the people who impoverish them and usurp their liberties.

I spoke with the shop chairman and the assistant shop chairman of one organized bank. These two young women told me of their pride and their faith in the union. The young woman who was the shop chairman told me that she and the other people in her bank were helping to bring other bank workers into the union. "We've got to bring them all in," she said. "That's the only way we'll be able to deal with the banks to get what we need."

Soon, perhaps, you will walk into a bank and find all the tellers, clerks, bookkeepers, guards and messengers wearing the CIO button. The bankers, of course, will be unhappy and they will have to revise their little handbooks.



"United Nations indeed! And why should my little Eustace be the Russian Red?"

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II. SARTRE AND EXISTENTIALISM

"From existentialism to cynicism the way is easy for those who no longer have the nerve to fight."

By LOUIS HARAP

This is the concluding installment of Mr. Harap's article. In the first part, published last week, he dealt with the nature of existentialism, and showed it to be, despite protestations to the contrary, heir to the idealist tradition of philosophy. Mr. Harap also indicated the negative aspects of Sartre's approach to ethical problems which stem from Sartre's conception of human relationships.

SARTRE claims to be an activist, and even a revolutionary. And he has applied his existentialist philosophy to current problems of a general nature. His opening article to his journal, *Les Temps Modernes* (Modern Times), was a vigorous affirmation of the responsibility of writers in relation to current social issues. He even goes so far as to assert: "I hold Flaubert and Goncourt responsible for the repressions which followed the Commune, because they wrote not a single line to prevent them." Sartre has defined his position toward Marxism and revolution in two articles in *Les Temps Modernes* of June and July of this year. Today's youth, he says, rejects materialism as philosophically false and idealism as "serving up a myth to the possessing classes." He then devotes one article to the "refutation" of materialism, by arguing that it is not dialectical because it is based on science, whose method, he says, is at once mechanical and idealistic. On the one hand, science deals with quantity alone and proceeds by the "linear" rather than the synthetic dialectical method, and on the other, utilizes scientific concepts in the idealistic, Hegelian sense. He concludes that materialism contains some truth, but not the whole truth, and that materialism is "*the only myth* which is suitable for revolutionary demands" but does not serve the long range needs of the revolutionary movement for "Truth."

In his second article Sartre expounds his view of "revolution." Here he reveals a complete misunderstanding of Marxism, even to the point of confusing determinism with fatalism. The Communists are misleading the workers, he says, by claiming "rights" for them, which Sartre sees as a bourgeois conception. For how can men have rights if nothing exists by right but, according to existentialism, only by chance? Of the oppressed, Sartre says: "Their parents were not put into the world for any particular purpose: but by chance, for *nothing*." Existence is absurd in the first place; it is therefore compounding an absurdity to suppose that men have rights. Revolutionary humanism, says Sartre, "is not based on human dignity but denies to man any special dignity." The human species, he says, is "an unjustifiable and contingent appearance," and the best that the revolutionary can do is to arrive at a "more rational equilibrium" for the whole race. What this equilibrium shall be he does not say, although one must suppose that he means that all men must become existentialists, for "revolutionary philosophy must be a philosophy of transcendence." Further, Sartre condemns the Marxist view that freedom is the recognition of necessity because he interprets it in mechanistic, fatalistic terms. Obviously this conception of freedom is incompatible with Sartre's view of freedom as absolute choice without dependence on the past, on society or history. He makes the vulgar, oft-refuted claim that the Marxist view of freedom makes individual action and effort impotent and only allows man to read history, not to make it.

"I well know," writes Sartre, "that there is no other salvation for man than the liberation of the working class." But there is an unbridgeable gap between his existentialist philosophy and his social activity. As we have seen, this philosophy is an exclusive concentration on an analysis of the stream of consciousness. It is impossible, according to this theory, to break out into earthy social problems because all problems are oriented to the central subjective concepts of existentialism. How can existentialism be fruitfully related to the maintenance of the level of the franc, pushing production to the maximum, defeating reaction, or intensifying the movement for nationalization? These are essentially irrelevant problems to the existentialist who is occupied merely with "playing" with personal relationships and dwelling on their analysis. Further, why should there be a revolutionary movement at all if men are doomed to frustration? Man is a "transcendent" creature under any system of society and can exercise his "freedom" under any circumstances since this is not determined by history or social circumstances. It is true that man has limited subjective freedom even under fascism (choosing to die rather than buckle under to the fascists). But surely political and social freedom vary considerably under different systems of society. Why should man be interested in changing his "situation" (a favorite phrase of Sartre's) since he will be no less frustrated under socialism than under fascism? In fact, Sartre has asserted: "Never were we freer than under the German occupation." Man is a prisoner of the necessarily self-destructive nature of consciousness from which there is no escape under *any* system of society. Existentialism in the past, as in the cases of Pascal and Kierkegaard, has usually found justification in God; but Sartre's rejection of this illusion leaves no hope of any kind for man if the consequences of his philosophy are rigorously adhered to. Hence existentialism is a reactionary philosophy because consistent adherence to it dictates inaction and impotence.

Let us look at several examples. What possible illumination of our contemporary predicament can one derive from Sartre's *No Exit*? The play begins and ends with generalized problems of consciousness. One of the characters is a collaborator, but Sartre is not concerned at all with the consequences of collaboration, though this is of course condemned, but with the *state of con-*

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sciousness of the character. And Sartre is not even primarily concerned with collaboration, but with the fact that the character collaborated out of cowardice. The real problem for this character is the generalized one of knowing whether or not he was actually a coward, which is in the nature of the case impossible to determine. In other words, the play is exclusively concerned with subjective problems. Or let us look at Sartre's essay, "Portrait of an Anti-Semite." Is Sartre trying here to examine the social consequences of anti-Semitism, its destructive effect on society? Sartre is unequivocal and brilliant in condemning the obscenity of anti-Semitism, but his primary interest is in showing that the anti-Semitic consciousness is actually a case of cowardice and bad faith. In other words, the essay is another existential inquiry into consciousness. In this way all of Sartre's writing, even when it treats social subjects, turn out in the end to be subjective analysis.

Existentialism is also reactionary in its attitude to science and history, indispensable tools for human improvement. Existentialism is essentially indifferent to science because it rejects the notion that scientific method yields the most valid truths. It relies upon some intuitive illumination for ultimate truth; and while Sartre admits science to have a limited utility, he does not look to it for a solution of human problems. He is here in the modern obscurantist tradition which numbers Bergson, intuitional philosophers and various other idealists among its protagonists. Like his master, Heidegger, Sartre also has rejected history as an ordered and scientific discipline. And indeed, how can history be ordered and intelligible under his view of absolute freedom?

"We must be content," writes Sartre, "to *make* our history by chance, from day to day, in choosing from all sides whatever seems best at the time."[5] He ridicules the attempt to make contemporary historical judgments because the future verdict will be very different from ours since men will in the future have perspective upon our time. But it is a fact that men like Marx and Engels have estimated their own time prophetically and accurately; and further, historical materialism has proved a powerful scientific tool in analyzing and judging historical forces. It is only by application of the most disciplined and rigorous knowledge of history that we can fend off the revival of fascism and bring society closer to socialism. When Sartre gives secondary importance to science and history and puts subjective analysis at the center of "revolutionary" activity, he is helping reaction to immobilize the intellectuals.

MUCH as Sartre wishes to reach the masses with his existentialist philosophy, there is no danger that he will succeed. He is making a stir in limited circles of intellectuals here, but the philosophy is too technical and difficult to make much of an impression even in these circles and may remain a half-understood fad for a time. Undoubtedly he has made a deeper impression in France: careless journalistic assertions about the extent of its influence would lead one to think that the French masses are wild partisans or opponents of existentialism. But in France too it is influential among intellectuals only. The ordinary man has too much common sense to have any patience with attenuated subjective analysis, which leaves empirical reality very early in its career. Although existentialism has yielded psychological insights, it is on the whole a logical and speculative construction that does not correspond with reality. The common man knows well enough that life is strewn with frustrations, that evil is ubiquitous, but he is too close to actual necessities for improving his life to believe in existential nihilism. There have been times in the past when the masses were overwhelmed by the desperation of their condition—the late Hellenistic period, for instance—and yielded to extreme other-worldly ways of life. But the time for this is past. Existentialism makes a vain bid for mass influence just at the time when objective conditions are most ripe for liberation of the working class from its age-old subjection.

The working class is now powerfully organized. In the Soviet Union it *is* the state, and in several other countries the working class together with its allies holds state power. A dynamic class does not yield to existentialist impotence. If you tell a trade unionist during a strike today that his relationship to his fellow-strikers is self-destructive, he will not pay much attention to you. What he knows empirically is that some relationships, such as unionism and political organization, are very effectual means of achieving better conditions of life.

As French Communists have pointed out, existentialism holds no terrors for the capitalists because it is completely subjective and pessimistic. They indicate that although his philosophy has been attacked by both Communists and Catholics, Sartre has chosen to polemize only with the Communists, instead of battling the reactionaries. He thus conforms to the classic pattern of petty-bourgeois "revolutionaries" who, in effect, see the Communists as their main competitor for adherents among the intellectuals and petty-bourgeoisie. Sartre is only a little more complex than most petty-bourgeois "revolutionaries" since he recognizes, verbally at least, that "the Communist Party is the only revolutionary party."[6] But his sustained polemics against the Communist Party philosophy, on the one hand, and his own subjective, enervating existential philosophy on the other, mark him as a reactionary influence. He is continuing the pre-war decadence of petty-bourgeois French intellectualism into the period of working-class upsurge.

Where Sartre will end is hard to know now. On his return from France recently, Alvarez del Vayo said: "As it stands today existentialism, for all political purposes, is a confusing, negative, self-defeating doctrine. From existentialism to cynicism the way is easy; and it is always in the ranks of the disillusioned that reaction finds, in the decisive moments, the intellectual complicity so useful in making every retreat appear harmless, even praiseworthy, to those who no longer have the nerve to fight."[7]

Fundamentally the existentialists, despite the protestations of men like Sartre, are overwhelmed with homelessness and isolation because they have not identified themselves with the working class where the only hope lies. The real revolutionary today is not the subjectivist, but the materialist who locates the most important struggles in a very real, objective society and realizes the most important tool in this struggle to be Marxism.

[5] J. P. Sartre, "The Nationalization of Literature," *View*, March-April 1946, p. 36.

[6] J. P. Sartre, "Materialisme et Revolution," *Les Temps Modernes*, July 1946, p. 32.

[7] Alvarez del Vayo, "Politics and the Intellectuals," *Nation*, Sept. 28, 1946, pp. 348-9.

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review and comment

FROM THE BOOKSHELF

IN SPITE OF TEARS, *by Sam Liptzin. Amcho.* $3.

HAVING published seventeen volumes in Yiddish, Sam Liptzin is now introduced to an English-reading audience in this first translated collection of his sketches on Jewish life. Mr. Liptzin is neither a novelist nor short-story writer nor poet, yet he captures elements of all three in his writings. He is, strictly speaking, the raconteur of Jewish literature. He creates literary capsules in the form of humoresques, monologues, skits, fantasies and bon mots—coated with flavorsome good humor but often filled with the meat of social substance.

The sketches are characterized above as dealing with *Jewish* life. This is not because the author has limited his thinking to Jews. On the contrary, one feels that he is striving for universality in his themes. But realizing that a writer most successfully approaches the general through the particular, Liptzin wisely approaches life through the eyes of the people he knows best—the tenement dwellers of Monroe Street, the garment workers, the petty bosses of the needle trades, the unemployed, the Miami-Lakewood social set. There is intimacy and affection in his writing, spiked with a mischief. Occasionally he wings off into fantasy, as in the lament of a bedbug who hungers after a rich and succulent lady but is doomed to spend his nights among the bloodless poor. For the most part, however, his humor derives from people themselves. He views with gentle irony the foibles and frailties of ordinary folk—the Tower of Babel in an East Side tenement, the squabbles and pretensions of summer boarders, the plight of a Jewish couple who, all other schemes having failed, decided to open a Chinese restaurant, Kosher style. His treatment of such Twentieth Century institutions as "Screeno" is hilarious.

But it is for the bosses that Liptzin reserves his most trenchant satire. These are not stereotype paunch-and-topper bosses, but the "cloak-and-suit boys" he knows so well; callous, competitive—and yet, because they are only small fry at best, bewildered and even a little pathetic in their futility. Liptzin dissects them under a harsh white light, but is always aware that even the most despicable among them is himself being ground inexorably between the fast-moving wheels of capitalism.

In Spite of Tears contains a few gems which sparkle in their own setting. "The Flashing Lamp" is a tale about a forgotten Jewish village in the "old country" which would have done credit to Sholem Aleichem. But most of the pieces must be regarded in context; each makes its small contribution to the general mood.

There are, perhaps, inevitably, a few weak lines in the collection. One or two of the serious pieces smack of the old "agit prop" material, with its contrived situations and its cliches. In several, the quality of pathos spills over into maudlin sentimentality—a common pitfall in some Jewish literature, and one which serious writers should take special care to avoid. But these "sob sisters" are borne along by the simple, unaffected humanity of the rest.

Irene Goldberg.

Looking at *In Spite of Tears* retrospectively, the over-all impression is one of sunshine rather than shadows. Sam Liptzin himself began life as a worker, an immigrant boy forced into the sweatshops of the garment center. He has a realist's faith in his class. No one knows life's dark corners better than he, but he writes about them in the major mode, with an abounding sense of resilience and hope. The meat and substance of his collection may best be summed up in one of his own aphorisms: "Do not forget the past, remember the present and fail not to regard the future."

LUCILLE BOEHM.

Chicago Dachau

THE JUNGLE, *by Upton Sinclair. Viking.* $2.50.

IN THE forty years since the publication of *The Jungle,* so many associations have gathered around it that a reviewer feels as though he were entering a living museum rather than reading a reissue of a novel. Just inside the door, for example, is the *Appeal to Reason,* in which *The Jungle* was first published serially. (Which of our publications today would undertake the serialization of a 343-page novel, no matter how militant or important?) Lincoln Steffens confirms Sinclair's depictions of American politics as no less rotten than the sausages of the Chicago meatpackers. A younger Mother Bloor officially and unofficially collects the wretched facts of stockyard life. The first Pure Food and Drug Act is passed as a result of the book's publication. Jack London cheers its appearance. Readers of translations in twenty-seven languages acclaim it. And in our own 1946, while the same meat barons are no longer able to crush the packing house workers, they can still starve out consumers until the administration gives in to the blackmail.

Yet when we brush, as far as possible, the association away, it seems incredible that the chief influence the book has had in our own country was that of "cleaning up" the stockyards.

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The story of Jurgis Rudkus, by showing that his life was scarcely better than those of the beasts in whose entrails he waded, was a call to action. The point was not that *animals* were slaughtered in filth and disease, but that *people*—not as an inhuman punishment for some crime, but as a result merely of their own poverty—worked in the same filth and caught the same diseases. Even outside the plant they were not safe. Landlords robbed them. Political machines used and dropped them. Jail for trivial causes was a daily possibilty. Jurgis' wife was driven to petty adultery (even the word "prostitution" makes the relationship sound too voluntary and profitable) with a foreman to keep her job. Children sold papers or begged or stole or took jobs where rats ate them as they slept. No visiting nurses came to tend the sick; they died. And all this because the Big Four packers (remember them?) were concerned only with what the balance sheet showed at the end of the year. What have figures to do with people?

The museum-visting reader today might criticize *The Jungle* by saying that too much happens to Jurgis, that he is converted too quickly to full-blown socialism (and a confused sort of socialism) at least; that after all, conditions are better now. But faults of plotting in the book are beside the point. Though few people now recognize even the title of 1905's best seller, Mrs. Humphrey Ward's *The Marriage of William Ashe*, *The Jungle* is still a pugnacious, insistent novel. In spite of the associations, it is no museum piece. The writing retains after forty years the eye-witness immediacy, the jolting shock of last year's first full reports of Auschwitz and Dachau: this Jurgis Rudkus is a real man, or many real men; he has endured these facts, and we must not forget them.

SALLY ALFORD.

No Other Way?

NOTHING IS A WONDERFUL THING, *by Helen Wolfert. Simon & Schuster.* $2.

FEW readers will want to accept the proposition stated in Mrs. Wolfert's title without argument. How can nothing possibly be a wonderful thing? Her attempt at an answer only comes toward the end of her book. It scarcely proves the proposition.

It appears (or Mrs. Wolfert tries to make it appear) that nothing only seems like a wonderful thing to the harried people of New York's Lower East Side, teeming and breathless on a hot summer day, which is Mrs. Wolfert's setting. These are people —people like ten-year-old Jenny and her chum Alfrieda, old Ezekiel Kahn, the Silberbrodts and their daughter Gloria, Sadie Katz and the Greensteins and all the too-many others packed in their narrow tenement flats —who "live by not living . . . chanting to themselves that they are nothing," according to Mrs. Wolfert. In her version of their stories, these are people so cut off from the natural life of the earth that they cannot even use their eyes or ears to grasp their misery:

What else but only nothing can come
To those whom fear and want have filled
So full there seems for them no other way
But to think that nothing is a wonderful thing?

Certainly they are people, as the note on the dust-jacket observes, "worth writing about, worth caring about—and worth reading about." It appears that Mrs. Wolfert does care about them, for as the note also observes, their world was once her own. Obviously she wants to say "something important" — and one need not question her wisdom in having "broken away from the conventional pattern to say it clearly, strongly, comprehensively in verse." One need not question it, that is, out of any notion that the unlovely realities of Lower East Side life are not proper material for poetry; they are perfectly proper material. And one need not question, either, her rejection of what the dust-jacket (with dubious accuracy) calls "formal poetry . . . adorned by the usual trappings" in favor of a pattern based on a loosely-handled four-stress line with irregular rhymes in occasional passages, which clearly aims to capture the rhythms of common speech. The intentions are good enough. It is only the performance one need question. Does she succeed in saying what she has to say "clearly, strongly, comprehensively"? I think she does not, and I think her failure lies both in what she has to say and in how she says it.

What is wrong? Apparently it is not from any lack of experience that Mrs. Wolfert suffers. The trouble seems to spring not from an inability to feel but from an inability to understand.

There may be those among the real-life prototypes of Mrs. Wolfert's tenement dwellers so burdened down by fear and want that there is "for them no other way/But to think that noth-

"De Profundis": one of a group of gouaches and oils in memory of the massacred Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe, by Ben-Zion. At the Bertha Schaefer Gallery through January 4.

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ing is a wonderful thing." There may also be those who think of liberation through political action as an idle and hopeless daydream, as far-fetched as Mrs. Wolfert's device for the introduction of this theme—which is to have her ten-year-old heroine find in the street a letter from a woman whose improbably glamorous revolutionary activities have landed her in a hospital bed. And no doubt, too, there are others whose one means of escape from their world of brick walls and fire-escapes is the means which ten-year-old Jenny finds—"poetry," shall we call it? but "poetry" of the vaguest and most sentimental sort, which only whisks its devotees off into an altogether other-worldly realm. Such vagaries as these are familiar enough, but is it Mrs. Wolfert's slum world from which they most often spring? Or shall we look rather to that more gracious and comfortable middle-class world, in which presumably she now lives and writes, as a more likely source of such notions? That past world seems to have grown a little dim for Mrs. Wolfert. The "feel" of it remains — the sights, the sounds, the smells—but not much more.

If the "feel" were enough to make poetry, Mrs. Wolfert might have succeeded better. Her lines catch the feel of life only too well. In their piling up of effect on effect, they groan under a burden as heavy as those borne by the tenement dwellers themselves; they move with the very breathlessness of tired people climbing stairs, slowed down by constant repetitions; or when they manage to break free, they stumble into a kind of awkward skip and jump. And every so often they fall with a thud as embarrassing as this, in their efforts to achieve a rhyme:

This tin-and-chromium rabbi with his chowder
Of modern thought in his aluminum pots
From which he serves no one.
The sun falls in a silken slant
On Freud and Mann, on Marx and Browder.

But the "feel" of life is not enough. Neither the "feel" nor the poet's feelings about it are enough. The poet needs understanding too—the kind of understanding that creates order out of chaos of "feel" and feelings.

Mrs. Wolfert's unlovely realities never become available to us in any meaningful way; they remain unlovely realities to be avoided. One comes back to her title: "Nothing is a wonderful thing." It fails to apply—fails as any generalization must in poetry, unless the poet finds the particulars to prove it, for poetry deals in particulars. Mrs. Wolfert knows the particulars, but her trouble comes in manipulating them to make them add up to her generalizations. They add up to nothing. And nothing, as she herself seems to suspect, is not really a wonderful thing at all.

WALTER MCELROY.

What Talmadge Told Me

(*Continued from page 8*)

boys," he said, "don't you-all get to arguin'. They'se justice on both sides," he said judiciously.

As I think back I recall the eery, macabre quality of the conversation. The values of these "humans" had been so corrupted that they discussed various forms of torture as though they were arguing the merits of Ty Cobb as against Walter Johnson.

THIS was the setting and the circumstances in which I met Eugene Talmadge some ten years ago. A decade later, I happened to be in Dachau on V-E day. I saw the bodies stacked like firewood outside the crematoria. I talked to some of the SS men who had been in charge of the camp. Some of them were bright-eyed and apple-cheeked like our Mr. McCleskey, but I didn't take the opportunity to question them on the proposition that agitated our two friends in Georgia.

Now as I look back I can feel the precise identity of the Talmadge way of life with that of Dachau. The latter was the logical culmination of the former. Except Gene never reached the position of affluence another man did who too had a lock that hung loosely over his forehead, who, too, knew how to talk to the so-called "wool-hats" of his nation, and had the debutantes stumping for him before, during and after he won power. I was spared the experience of ever meeting Goering, but from all I read, he too had that folksy way down pat, roaring about and pulling his corny cracks in a manner aimed to endear him with the common folks.

Well, for these reasons I cannot go along with those who propose to speak only well of the dead. I cannot squeeze one tear down my cheek at the demise of the colorful figure from Georgia.

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sights and sounds

LIFE WITH RUTH'S FATHER

In "Years Ago" the Joneses are on the firing line. Shaw and O'Casey presented in repertory.

By ISIDOR SCHNEIDER

THERE are striking points of resemblance between Ruth Gordon's *Years Ago* and *Life With Father*. Its setting in the early nineteen-hundreds is far enough back to provide similar agreeable nostalgias for the seniors in the audience and period charms for the juniors. And much of its appeal, as in *Life With Father*, comes from lovingly-recalled intimacies in a family dominated by a similarly blustering father.

Some resemblances were inevitable, for *Years Ago*, like *Life With Father*, is autobiography, and the two authors were contemporaries. But where *Years Ago* resembles the older play it brings improvements. The characterization in *Years Ago* is rounder, depending less on extremes of male choler and female naivete, and drawing from other sources of personality. And the doings on the stage serve narrative functions as well as character exposition. They have dramatic direction; a story has been well and quite fully told when the last curtain descends.

Equally important, the family on the stage is not presented in isolation. We are constantly aware of its troubled and insecure relationship with the world outside its doors. Privacy is one of the middle-class privileges. The Joneses of *Years Ago* are a poor family, unendingly conscious of trends at the factory, the moods of its executives, the limits of the father's $37.50 foreman's salary that can never be stretched to cover everything. Luxuries like theater, magazines and a telephone must be conspired for. And their neighborliness has a little of the closeness of battle comradeship; these people are on the firing lines of the class war. Something of that gets into the play and gives it a depth not suggested by its charming surface.

As narrative, the action centers around the stage-struck daughter whose ambitions have to overcome not only the normal parental reluctances but the father's determination to see his daughter embarked on the sanitary life of a gym teacher — gymnastics being one of the panaceas of that period. After those have been overcome, the greater difficulties of a hostile economy intervene. To win over these calls for a special kind of heroism on the part of the whole family. Making that felt through the charming humors of the piece is one of its achievements.

A third distinction of the play is that it has affection and respect for people. It is rather a novelty to see such feelings expressed on the stage after seasons crowded with hatred, suspicion and contempt for human beings. There is more than sympathy here for human beings confronting hard fates—there is awareness of the strengths by which they change their fates.

Years Ago makes a deceptively slight appearance on the stage. It is one of those pieces that linger and enlarge in the memory. The reviewers, rushing to meet the morning deadlines, struggled to account for this spreading afterglow with words like charm, tenderness, warmth, humor. Perhaps, when they work out their week-end reconsiderations of the performance, they may place the explanations in those attitudes that enabled the playwright to perceive courage and dignity when it appeared in a working-class family. Such perception is usually most difficult for a member of the family.

Garson Kanin's understanding direction gives the production clear outlines and flexible movement. The acting is uniformly good. There is no falling off even in the minor roles; and the performances in the main roles are of a high order. Fredric March as Clinton Jones, the father, fully realizes a character role of great emotional range. He portrays a man in whom quick temper expresses not paternal tyranny but the tensions of inner conflict—particularly the frustrations of a man of independent mind in the mean position of a factory foreman, of a generous man forced into the inquisitions of a miser. Florence Eldridge, as Mrs. Jones, is quite perfect as the harried buffer between two strong personalities, with the outlines of her own worn down by the buffeting. Patricia Kirkland, as Ruth, is emotionally raw in just the degree required for her part as the stage-struck adolescent. And Donald Oenslager's settings are unobtrusively right.

FOR the fourth production of its season The American Repertory Theater has put on one of Shaw's shrewdest comedies, *Androcles and the Lion*. It happens to be a short play—two acts instead of the customary three —and for a curtain raiser, the company added Sean O'Casey's richly humorous one-actor, *Pound on Demand*. The two, together, make the company's best bill of the season.

It is sufficient to say of the less familiar of the two pieces, *Pound on Demand*, that it is a characteristic bit of O'Casey humor. The scene is a small postoffice; the action involves the unsuccessful efforts of a thirsty man to guide a drunken friend, who has a postal-savings account, through the formalities of drawing out a pound, to finance some further drinking. The two are played with wonderful, stumbling vigor by Philip Bourneuf and Ernest Truex. The human obstacles, other than their own condition, are excellently presented by Cavada Humphrey as the tart postal clerk, Margaret Webster as the haughty woman who preempts the postoffice writing table, and Eugene Stuckman as the policeman.

The main play, *Androcles and the Lion*, deals with a group of early Christian martyrs and their decline from exaltation to panic on the last stages of their route to the arena in Rome, where they will confront trained gladiators and famished lions.

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It is remarkable what a wealth of historical and psychological perceptions Shaw can get into his bright clear lines; they never sag, because their wisdom is never a burden. This incomparable dialogue calls for a light and fluent handling which it sometimes failed to get when the actors, over-conscious of their roles as primitive Christians challenging the decadent Roman authority, put hortatory accents and weights into their voices. Furthermore, it takes better acting than Marion Evenson provided to keep the role of Androcles' wife from running down into strident and obviously typed shrewishness.

These, however, are minor flaws. Ernest Truex gives one of his best performances as Androcles, the animal lover and 100 percent Christian non-resister whose kindliness proves to be a powerful sorcery; Victory Jory, as Ferrovius, is convincing as the tormented strong-arm guy, trying to be the man of peace, making wonderful conversions with his fists and turning apostate when the sword provided for his ordeal in the arena is put in his hands; Philip Bourneuf is a charmingly blase Caesar; John Becher, in a mask made by Remo Bufano, is gracefully lugubrious as the suffering lion; and June Duprez as Lavinia and Richard Waring, as the the Roman captain, are attractive as the single reasonable, unneurotic specimens on the two sides. Performing to striking music by Marc Blitzstein and against the witty settings of Wolfgang Roth, they combine to make it a memorable theater evening.

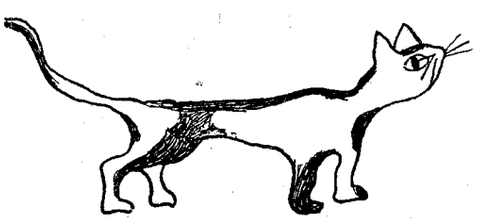
"THE FOREST": ANOTHER COMMENT

THOUGH I agree with much of Isidor Schneider's criticism of Lillian Hellman's *Another Part of the Forest* [NEW MASSES, December 24], he has, it seems to me, done less than justice to the play. This is admittedly not Miss Hellman at her best. But Lillian Hellman at three-quarters strength is so superior to nine-tenths of American playwrights at their crest that her weaknesses ought to be considered in proper scale. I feel that Schneider's emphasis is misplaced. This is because, I think, he minimizes and in part misreads the social meaning of the play.

In all her plays Miss Hellman seeks through the personal relationships among her characters to convey social ideas. *Another Part of the Forest* is no exception even though its social meaning is projected with less force and fullness than in Miss Hellman's earlier *The Little Foxes*, which deals with most of the same characters and essentially the same theme. I think it an error to regard this latest play as simply a literal representation of personal viciousness, of mutually destructive hate and rapacity among the members of the Hubbard family. Viewed in this way, one must conclude that *Another Part of the Forest* is too alien to human experience to be more than a skillfully contrived tour de force. But to me it seems unmistakable that the play, which is laid in an Alabama town in 1880, is the parable of a class: the corrupt and predatory Southern merchant capitalists who enriched themselves in the Civil War at the expense of the Negro and white masses as well as of a section of the former slaveocracy. These wealthy merchants, if anything, surpassed in wolfishness their Northern counterparts, and a little later, with the aid of Northern capital, became, as *The Little Foxes* showed, the minor industrial robber barons who looted the South's wealth. Thus, what is highly exceptional and almost incredible as the behavior of members of an actual family becomes a large and truthful symbol of how the rising capitalist overlords behaved—and in more subtle ways continue to behave—within their own class family. What else but lust for profit and power, envy and greed and hate rules the rulers of the capitalist jungle?

Nor does it seem to me that *Another Part of the Forest* contains "the social implication that personal evil is the source of wealth." Certainly, in the case of the younger Hubbards their personal evil has been stamped in the die of their father's prime passion: money. As for the elder Hubbard, I find it difficult to separate his personal corruption from the social corruption that produced his wealth, and to judge which is cause and which effect.

The characterization in the play is, as Schneider puts it, "oversimplified," but I don't think this is because it is "emotionally one-dimensioned." The drama necessarily must concentrate characterization and action and sacrifice nuances which only the novel can convey in order to achieve effects that are beyond the power of the novel. The most famous villain in all literature, Iago, is "emotionally one-dimensioned," but this single dimension is given depth and richness through interplay with the character of Othello. The trouble with the characterization in *The Forest* is that it is static. The action, instead of revealing a many-faceted evil, leaves us at the end with little more insight into the characters than at the beginning. This is a consequence of what to me is the central defect of the play—a defect in both social and artistic conception: the omission of any positive character and the complete ineffectuality of the only two decent people in the play, the demented mother of the Hubbard clan and the poverty-stricken aristocrat, Birdie Bagtry. On this point I agree entirely with Schneider. *Another Part of the Forest* ends with the iron circle of hate and cupidity, in which the characters are caught, unbroken even though their relative positions have shifted. Nothing is really resolved. The effect is consequently far weaker than in *The Little Foxes* in which Regina Hubbard's hus-



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band, Horace Giddens, and her daughter, Alexandra, provide the necessary counterpoint—the "good" as against the "evil"—through which both action and characterization move toward climactic resolution: Alexandra, freeing herself of the family dominion after her father's death, achieves moral mastery through her determination to fight the evil represented by all the Hubbards who, in the blustering words of her Uncle Ben, "will own this country some day."

Though *Another Part of the Forest* does not rise to the heights of *The Little Foxes* or *Watch on the Rhine*, it is, nevertheless, a characteristic work of the foremost American playwright since O'Neill turned his back on American reality and retired to the monastery of philosophic nihilism.

A. B. MAGIL.

FILMS OF THE WEEK

SERIOUS European movie-makers have a greater respect for John Ford than for any other single contemporary Hollywood director. I have been told that Soviet students of the film art study his pictures as part of their fundamental training. Such respect for his work is not unjustified, for on the basis of *The Informer*, *Grapes of Wrath*, *Long Voyage Home*, and perhaps *Stagecoach*, Ford is truly Hollywood genius at its creative best.

Yet it is possible for this man to come out with a stinker like *My Darling Clementine*. This film is as empty as the others were rich with meaning and full-dimensioned characters. *Clementine* will puzzle his European admirers, since the power of Hollywood with its inexorable yardstick of box-office returns, its affluence, its big-money pressures, direct and indirect, the glittering rewards for its well-behaved sons, condition the individual in a way unknown elsewhere in the world.

Clementine, for all its hollowness, bears the marks of the master, much as a writer retains characteristics of style long after he is creatively spent. Ford can still use dead silence on the screen to achieve heightened dramatic effects, as in the closing gun battle. This technique provides a beautiful relief from the music bursts used by most directors, sheeplike, to announce the moment of heavy drama. He can still provide an extra illusion of reality by such simple touches as having his characters eat from time to time. I cannot recall a Western where a restaurant, as much as a saloon, has played a regular part of the life of the town. His preoccupation with people finds expression in the solid scene of the church meetin' where the parishioners dance the afternoon away.

But the material defeats his best efforts. The most pretentious scene is the most laughable. An actor reciting "To Be or Not To Be," from *Hamlet*, is frightened by the barfly bullies into a lapse of memory. Who should finish the speech but that beautiful hunk of flesh, Victor Mature, a kissfool who is just discovering that his lips are also organs of speech. Ford was probably attempting to show that the cattlemen were crude, foul-mouthed louts, but the result is a caricature of what he was after. The audience tittered.

The result was foreseeable. Wasting his talents on "Did-he-go-this-away-no-he-went-thataway" operas, Ford is bound to get one-dimensioned, unreal and unbelievable characters and behavior.

Unlike most operators in Hollywood, Ford is in a good position to pick his subject matter and his cast. He doesn't get kicked around like most of the others. What possibilities he sees in worn-out second-rate stories like *Clementine*, only he can say. Maybe the answer is in the glittering rewards, or maybe they're really closing down on him. If so, times are really tougher than they appear.

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THE Soviet film, *The Taras Family*, is the solidly-constructed work you expect from Mark Donskoy (*The Rainbow*, etc.). The film reflects the successful efforts of the Soviet Union to combat the anti-Semitism that the Nazis attempted to reintroduce in conquered territory. In this respect, the sentiments of the film are as refreshing as they are instructive. The Soviets waged a bitter struggle to wipe out the footholds the Nazi's bestial ideas had achieved, and many are the stories illustrating this struggle. But one incident in the film dramatizes as well as any story I have heard the staunchness of the Soviet educational system and the character of the Soviet worker. The Jewish doctor of the community has been caught in the Nazi dragnet and is marching to his death with the other Jews of the town. The head of the Taras family bows when he sees him. "You bow to me?" asks the doctor. "To the burden of your suffering," replies Taras the elder.

The meat of the film is in the portrayal of those villagers who are too old for either regular or guerrilla service. Just as *The Rainbow* singled out for treatment the women and children of an occupied village, so *The Taras Family* concentrates on these salty and lovable oldsters. However familiar the patterns of resistance have become, they are never completely the same, since each group finds its own *modus operandi*. But the ending in each of these films is becoming a somewhat tedious formula. The army, navy and air corps need not figure in every final curtain. The victory of Stalingrad is an established fact, but if pictures end without the explicit demonstration of that fact, victory is just as sweet, and the ending considerably more original. After all not every skirmish, nor every village, lay in the immediate physical orbit of the major battles.

"JERICHO," a French film at the 55th St. Playhouse, is more the story of some hostages caught up in one of the incidents of resistance than it is a story of the Underground itself, as it is advertised. In one of the occupied villages of northern France, the threat of sabotage against a fuel train causes the Nazis to round up some two-score villagers as hostages. The Underground is warned that if the petrol train is dynamited the hostages will die. The drama of the film is supplied mostly by the feelings of the various

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townsmen held in prison. Many of them hope that the train will be saved, others that it will be destroyed.

No effort is made to explain the issues—why the train must be blown up, why hostages must pay for sabotage—as was so successfully done in *Hangmen Also Die*. The main concern is the study of character in relation to the accidental circumstances of imprisonment. Only seven of the forty have voluntarily chosen jail as a gesture of resistance. After the train is demolished, the hostages are locked up in a church, there to spend their last night. Here the film builds in interest and dramatic veracity, as each man acts individually within the limits of his own character. Some break down, others find strength, and still others remain dazed and silent as though unable to comprehend this unexpected turn in their lives. Patriotism becomes a personal thing as each man understands the issues. The situation is handled in characteristic French style with a fair share of psychological insight, absence of childish heroics, and with a decent respect for character and reality. Although by no means *the* film of French resistance, it is certainly worth seeing.

JOSEPH FOSTER.

John Cage's Music

UNDAUNTED by the usual difficulties that face an American composer in having his works widely performed, John Cage writes music that can only be played on pianos that he has previously doctored, by loosening the strings, adding bits of tin and felt, and otherwise making the old instrument produce a variety of strange timbres. The result is that some critics have dismissed his work as infantile and incomprehensible, while others have hailed it as opening up "new horizons" and as a kind of poetic music "of the future."

A complete evening of his music for one and two pianos, performed by Maro Ajemian and William Masselos, proved to be a completely enjoyable experience, requiring very little straining of the ears for new poeticisms. I suppose this sort of music can be called the opening up of "new horizons," but actually these horizons were opened up in music a thousand years ago or more. John Cage, like many contemporary experimenters in the various arts, has gone back for his materials to the forms and sounds of folk art. His music, with

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its wisps of tender melody, its fascinating cross rhythms and variety of twanging and percussive sounds, may sound bewildering to ears accustomed to the Lizst or Chopin piano. Anyone who has heard the music of Indian, Flamenco or Hungarian folk groups, or small jazz bands, has heard similar fascinating play with rhythms and clashing timbres, with the counterpoint arranged on such a rhythmic and tone color basis. This doesn't mean that Cage is writing folk music, but that he is trying to reproduce on the piano the kind of form and sound found in folk music for his own intelligent, expressive and highly sophisticated ends.

To my ears, the three dances for two pianos and the four sonatas for single piano were completely successful. Such music cannot be compared to the drama of a Beethoven sonata, nor does it seem to me that Cage's approach can permit of such emotional designs. It is a restricted kind of music. But if we can accept the similarly restricted music of the Scarlatti sonatas, the Chopin Etudes or the Debussey Preludes, we can accept Cage for the fresh pleasure he offers. In fact, much of his music is very close to the Debussy piano works.

Demanding a prepared piano as the medium for his art, Cage is of course hindering his own chances to be widely heard, although American composers are so little regarded anyway in their own country that he doesn't seem to be giving away much. But it seems to me that Cage could apply the same musical imagination to chamber music, or a small combination such as the jazz band, and perhaps get his ideas across more widely.

His "Book of Music for Two Pianos" proved harder for me to take, possibly because it needed a second hearing, and possibly because in it Cage made less use of the expressive little melodies of the other works and was engaged in exploring scientifically the timbres and structural resources of his art. His experiments are all to the ood, for an important problem in nusic has always been that of making ie instruments speak more completely and effectively. Cage's invention will certainly never replace the familiar piano, but it is a valid instrument for his own valid music, and it is a pity that such experiments must take place in the restricted and rarefied atmosphere into which they are forced today.

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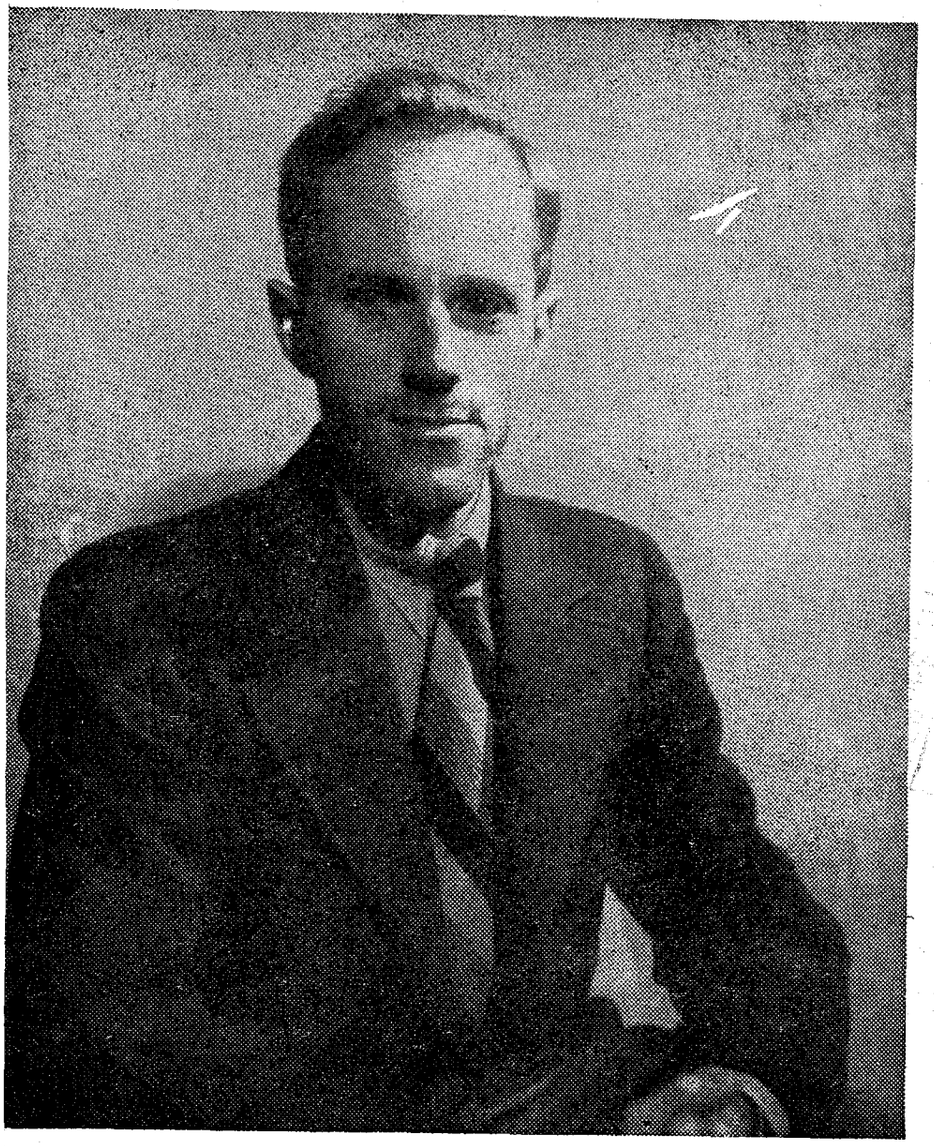

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A scientist by training, Mr. Carter has done research in physical chemistry with papers published in American and British technical journals. He has taught at the University of Manitoba and has worked on industrial problems related to mining and smelting. He is a member of the Canadian Institute of Chemistry and a Fellow of the Canadian Geographical Society.

Mr. Carter will write regularly for NEW MASSES on new developments in science covering both its theoretical and philosophical aspects. His next article, to appear in these pages shortly, will discuss trends in cancer research.

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